

INSIDE

The city of Belleville is trying to make sure that it shares with surrounding townships in the region's current housing construction boom.

PAGE 6.

Ann Arbor saw a rebound in both residential and commercial construction in 1994. New housing sparked the rebound, and the vast majority of money spent in that segment was for single-family homes.

PAGE 11.

Augusta Township officials are stressing infrastructure as they look to the future. With little industrial tax base, the township has been busy improving services to residents this past year.

PAGE 13.

Catherine McAuley Health System had a boom year, which included the opening of a new \$8 million heart institute. More of the same is planned for 1995. And a few miles to the southeast, Beyer Memorial Hospital – now known as Oakwood Hospital's Beyer Center – also has big plans for the coming year.

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The village of Chelsea is grappling with the delicate balance between small-town quality of life and the economic development, which often is needed to keep that quality of life high.

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OUTLOOK '95

COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • LINDA WAN

Ypsilanti Township's Washtenaw Business Park has ended a decade-long jinx with the arrival of its first tenant, Engineered Plastics Products, which moved its manufacturing operations from Roseville.

Township enjoys good year

By WILL STEWART
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Harry Hutchison feels like Ypsilanti Township is in a pretty good position.

While the township is growing steadily, development has not been so fast as to cause growing pains in Washtenaw County's second-largest community.

"We experienced growth in all areas of zoning," said Hutchison, the township's development director. "Last year was the best I can remember."

Besides additions to a \$1 million laboratory at the Ford Motor Co. Rawsonville plant and a 17,000-square-foot addition to Blackmore Industries off of Rawsonville Road, several housing developments got started during 1994.

Perhaps the most important piece of the development puzzle was the addition of Engineered Plastic Products Inc. to the Washtenaw Business Park. The company built an 85,000-square-foot plant in the industrial park and plans to move its current operation in Roseville to the new facility this month.

The new plant will employ about 100 people initially, but could quickly grow to as much as 120.

Formerly known as the Huron Center, the industrial park on Huron Street just south of I-94 has seen frustrated attempts to attract business to it for nearly a decade.

I THINK WHEN THE AUTO INDUSTRY WASN'T DOING SO WELL, THINGS FELL BACK FOR THE SMALLER BUSINESSES. THAT'S ALL STARTING TO CHANGE NOW.

HARRY HUTCHISON,
YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

"It took a while, that's true," Hutchison said of the western section of the 393-acre park, which for years housed only a McDonald's restaurant. The Radisson Resort and Conference Center and the Huron Golf Club occupy the eastern section of the park.

"I think when the auto industry wasn't doing so well, things fell back for the smaller businesses,"

Hutchison noted. "That's all starting to change now."

"It's a choice spot," he added. "(It) always has been."

If recent interest in the industrial park is a positive indication of the township's economic health, so is its lack of leasable retail space.

Such space is hard to come by, according to Hutchison.

"It's rapidly being used up," he said. "We used to have a lot of space along Washtenaw (Avenue), but now both that and Michigan Avenue are booked up pretty good."

The lack of rentable space along those two main corridors is an indication of a strong economy in the township, Hutchinson said.

"People want to lease space because they know they can make a business work here," he said.

With a strong economy comes jobs, and with jobs comes a demand for housing, Hutchinson observed. Several subdivisions and apartments either were

See TOWNSHIP, Page 3

Ypsilanti plans to spruce up downtown

BY JOHN A. WOODS
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

A variety of proposed projects and successes have the potential to resurrect Ypsilanti's economic climate. "1994 was a good year and 1995 will be a better one," says Ypsilanti City Manager Herb Gilsdorf.

"We are coming out of the economic doldrums in the city," says Gilsdorf. "And when the downtown work is completed, we are going to see renewed activity in downtown because it will be that much more attractive and functional."

Long-range planning by the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority, augmented with a \$350,000 Michigan Department of Transportation grant and an \$825,000 bond issue, has resulted in a downtown renovation project, including a new streetscape plan and a redesign of Michigan Avenue. The proposal also includes a facelift of the Ypsilanti City Hall.

Other recent economic highlights include:

- Completion of the \$1.4 million Harriet Commerce Center

- Plans for a \$5 million commercial development on Harriet Street

- Plans to upgrade the city's West Commerce Park

- A state grant award for housing rehabilitation

In an effort to attract new tenants, investors and businesses, the streetscape project lays groundwork for what city officials hope will be an aesthetically pleasing and functional central business district, says DDA Executive Director Lori Ward.

"I think that it's been proven in other communities, that when we start spending some public dollars, we will attract some private investors and private proper-

See CITY, Page 3

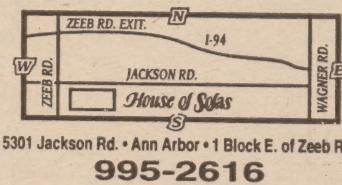
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COMMUNITIES

Continued from 1

CITY: Renovation plan centers on Michigan Avenue

ty owners," says Ward.

The DDA hired design consultants Beckett and Raeder Inc. of Ann Arbor to prepare the streetscape plan, which includes landscaping, historic-style lighting, street furniture and better signs.

Ward says residents likely will see construction begin in June, including a reconfiguration of the downtown portion of Michigan Avenue. The design firm has concluded that turning Michigan Avenue into a boulevard should top the project schedule.

The project, says Gilsdorf, should make the downtown area nearly irresistible. "Your Ann Arbor types who are looking for an inexpensive place to rent to set up a boutique or shop . . . are going to jump on this," he says.

Another potential boost to the city's tax base is the recent addition of Bennett Installation Corp. to the West Commerce Park. Last summer Bennett pulled up stakes in Pittsfield Township for a new headquarters in Ypsilanti.

The 24,000-square-foot facility will include office and manufacturing space for approximately 25 employees.

In an effort to increase the marketability of the 62-acre commerce park, Ypsilanti's Community and Economic Development department is improving the site on South Mansfield, between Michigan Avenue and I-94.

Late last year, landscaping and new signs were added, and new perimeter fencing on the park's eastern boundary is in the works,

'My first four years here were times of economic hardship. We had to defer street and sidewalk maintenance, and it was sort of like we were looking down a dark hole. But in the last two years, the hole in the ground has become a tunnel with a little light at the end of it.'

— City Manager Herb Gilsdorf

says CED director Jennifer Goulet. The Swisher Realty Co. has been selected to actively market park properties.

The \$1.4 million Harriet Commerce Center is a major bright spot on the city's economic horizon. Completed in June 1994, the strip mall features a restaurant, clothing stores and office space at the corner of South Hamilton and Harriet streets.

Across the street from the center, on a 10.8-acre site, plans for a \$5 million commercial development are being considered by Ann Arbor developer and real estate bro-

ker Shoeb Sharieff. If all goes well, the site would include a 40,000-square-foot grocery store and a 7,500-square-foot video rental outlet.

Sharieff also is involved in the city's Home Rental Rehabilitation Program. On Jan. 20, the CED entered into an agreement with Sharieff to assist in the renovation of an apartment complex on the corner of Washtenaw Avenue and North Washington Street. The project includes grants totaling \$160,000 for eight units that must be rented to low- to moderate-income tenants for 15 years.

According to Gilsdorf, last year's efforts marked the beginning of a long-awaited economic turnaround.

"My first four years here were times of economic hardship," he says. "We had to defer street and sidewalk maintenance, and it was sort of like we were looking down a dark hole. But in the last two years, the hole in the ground has become a tunnel with a little light at the end of it."

Over the past few years the city has had to lay off employees and make other drastic cuts to balance its \$10 million budget. Gilsdorf says it's too soon to speculate on what the improved business climate will mean for the budget, but he said there is hope.

"These are positive things that are happening, and it looks like the next several years will be a time of improving economy locally," he said. "We are very optimistic that it will lead to some increases in our city tax base."

Continued from 1

TOWNSHIP: Housing strong

completed or started during 1994.

"It was a good year for residential growth," he said.

Most significant among 1994 housing developments was the start of construction of 204 single-family homes in the Ford Lake Village subdivision off of South Huron River Drive.

The houses are targeted to sell for about \$140,000, Hutchison said.

In addition, work was completed on the eighth and final phase of the Streamwood subdivision at Merritt and Whittaker roads, also south of I-94.

Meanwhile, Hutchison noted, the township Planning Commission is considering site-plan submissions from several other developers who hope to construct subdivisions and apartment complexes there.

Among them is a proposal to construct a 184-unit apartment building on South Huron River Drive near Tuttle Hill Road, a request to construct 64 apartment units on Holmes Road near Harris Road and a plan for 88 condominiums on Textile Road near Tuttle Hill Road.

With those developments already in the pipeline, Hutchison said 1995 promises to be another successful year for Ypsilanti Township.

"We're getting lots of homeowner permits for additions and maintenance, so you know things are happening out there," he said.

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COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO

Allan Carson gets his supplies together outside one of the new houses being built at the Glennborough Estates subdivision in Superior Township.

Superior tightens reins on growth

BY JOHN MULCAHY
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Superior Township likes to bill itself as the last bit of green space between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Squeezed by burgeoning development in Ann Arbor and Canton townships, Superior includes such diverse communities as the hamlet of Dixboro, the Sycamore Meadow subsidized housing complex, century-old family farms, woodlands and wetlands.

Township government, reacting to the concerns of many residents, has emphasized keeping the township the way it is — as opposed to job creation or housing development.

"Bigger is not always better," Supervisor William McFarlane is fond of saying.

Yet, developers continue to knock at Superior's door. The township issued 48 new single-family home building permits last year. Projects under way or scheduled to begin by mid-year eventually could add 1,125 new dwelling units to the township. New home categories range from six-figure houses to 644 new lots in two mobile home parks.

The developments could raise the township's population from 9,100 now to about 12,000 in the next few years.

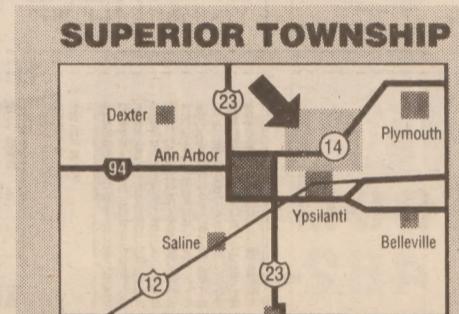
The township has been just as cautious about job creation as housing, preferring to let neighboring townships go after industry. Outside of the Catherine McAuley Health System, whose campus occupies the far southwestern corner of the township, no major job-creating developments have taken place in the township in the last couple of years. One development currently planned and likely to add some jobs is a senior citizens assisted-living complex at Geddes and Prospect roads.

"The township is not looking for housing or employment centers," McFarlane said. That does not mean it is necessarily opposed to them, he said, but any new developments must be compatible with the existing environmental conditions and land uses.

While bigger might not necessarily be better, it does cost more, McFarlane said. Bowing to reality this summer, the township sought to assure police funding by proposing a dedicated 1-mill police tax. Voters narrowly passed the measure.

The total tax levy for all township services this year is 5.1 mills.

By far the biggest employer in the township is the Catherine McAuley, with 5,203 full- and part-time workers at its Superior



POPULATION: 8,720

RACE: White 70% Black 28% Asian 2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 34% \$25-\$75K: 59%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 79%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead,

Ypsilanti schools): 27.38; Willow Run

schools, 30.78; Ann Arbor schools, 38.14.

For 1993: Ypsilanti, 67.6; Willow Run, 64.2;

Ann Arbor, 50.5

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER:

Catherine McAuley Health System has 5,302 employees, compared to 5,101 a year ago. 1994 Taxes: \$785,438. 1995 taxes: \$866,981.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute opens on Catherine McAuley Health System campus. Construction underway on 463-lot mobile home park. Superior Land Conservancy buys 131 acres to preserve it from development.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Housing projects that could eventually add as many as 397 new homes expected to get under way. SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

Township location and a corporate-wide payroll of \$212 million in 1994.

The McAuley complex is home to the privately financed Michigan Heart & Vascular Institute, which cost more than \$8 million to build and opened in the spring of 1994. This month, another group of doctors will open the \$10 million Michigan Orthopedic Center on the McAuley campus.

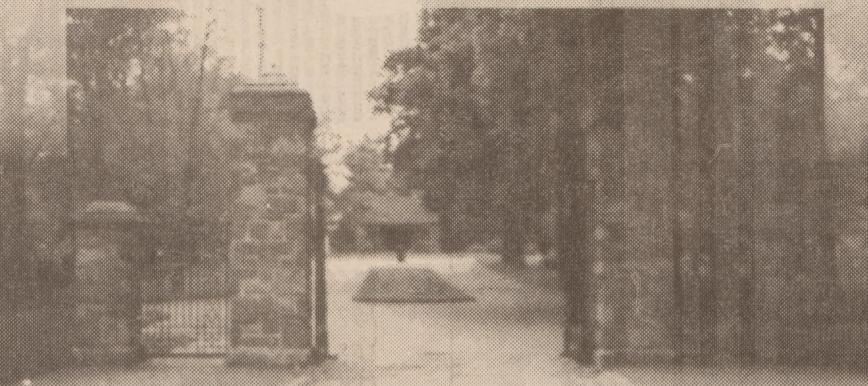
Because they are privately owned and for profit, those developments will add to the township's tax base, McFarlane said.

The township Planning Commission, known among developers for its attention to the minutia of site plans and its generally prickly attitude toward urban encroachment, has put up a stiff resistance to new building projects.

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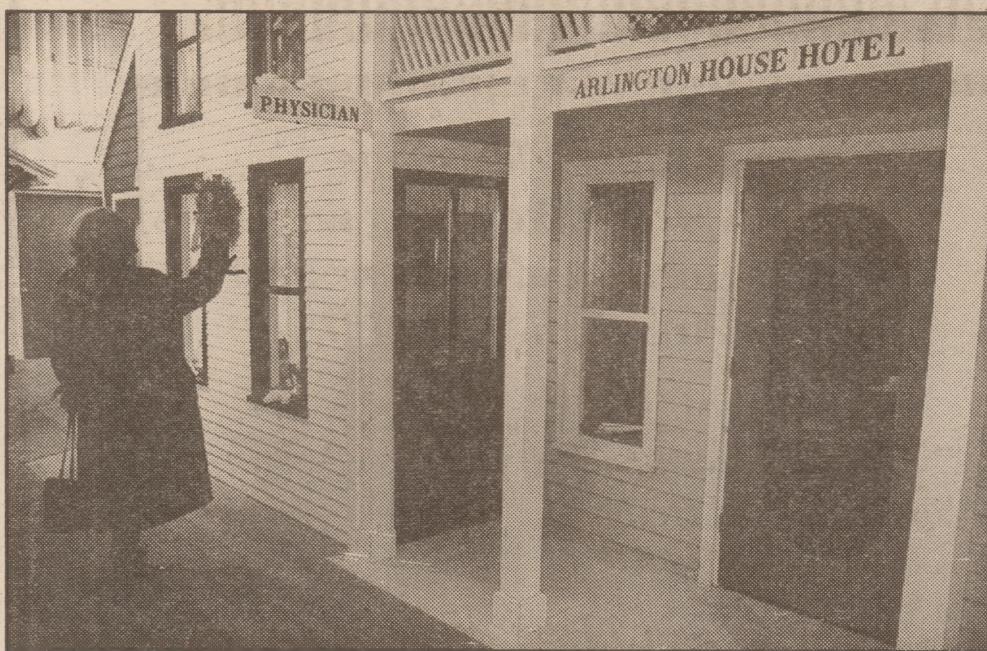
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COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • SCOTT SADY

A visitor at the Belleville Area Museum looks over a replica of the former Arlington House Hotel.

'94 a tumultuous year for Belleville

By MARJORIE KAUTH-KARJALA
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

As the central city of a growing suburban area, the city of Belleville must fight for its economic vitality.

A big part of that fight is assuring that some of the booming housing growth in the area is located within the city limits rather than in the wide open spaces of Sumpter and Van Buren townships, said City Manager Reid Charles.

By having new housing within the city, the city's tax base grows and allows the city to continue offering services.

Downtown continues to struggle. The former Golden Boy restaurant at 404 Main St. remains vacant. The Salvation Army thrift store, also on Main Street, announced it will close this year.

But successes are also apparent. The antique mall which opened last June recently expanded, and a new gift shop, Heart to Heart, has taken the place of Miss Ginger's on Main Street, which closed last year.

In 1994, the city reached the final stages of negotiation on the Crosswinds subdivision project, which is to be at Savage and Sheldon roads.

Although a final development agreement has not been approved, the city has borrowed money to help finance some of the improvements needed for the subdivision.

Charles stressed the importance of the Crosswinds project and the Harbour Pointe subdivision on West Huron River Drive.

"Between the two of them, they represent the future of the city," said Charles.

1994 was a tumultuous year for the city.

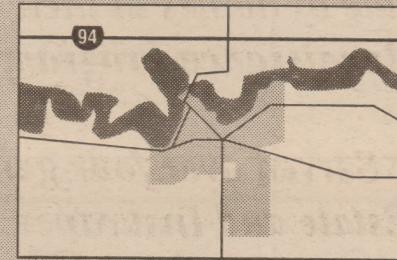
The previous city manager, Jeffery Przygocki, committed suicide last June. The city was thrown into turmoil by his death.

Charles said an important goal for the coming year is to establish a more secure management structure in which more than one person knows key details of the operations.

Under the new structure, the title of assistant city manager will be added to the current clerk/treasurer position. This would mean the city manager would share information with the clerk/treasurer.

In other development in the city, the long-vacant A&P store on Third Street appears to have a buyer. The Oakwood Health Care System, based in Dearborn, plans to build a

BELLEVILLE



POPULATION: 3,270

RACE: White 97% Other 3%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 37% \$25-\$75K: 59%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 62%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead): 35.62; 1993: 73.2.

LARGEST EMPLOYER: Van Buren School District, with about 700 employees, compared to 670 employees the previous year.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Columbia Court. The senior housing complex paid \$99,776 in 1994, compared to \$136,097 in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Completion of a sewer separation project on East Columbia Avenue.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Construction of the Crosswinds subdivision project expected to begin this year.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

medical clinic on the site. If possible, the existing building would be used for the clinic, said David Ippel, vice president at the health care system.

The Doane property and adjacent properties on West Liberty Street are still on option to the developer of the Crosswinds subdivision. The option expires this spring, and there are no definite plans for the site. But Charles said it is still possible that Crosswinds developers might come up with a solid proposal this year.

The former Doane building was torn down in the fall of 1993.

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IN PROGRESS

Sumpter Township balances development, environment

By MARJORIE KAUTH-KARJALA
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

For Glenn Bowles, township administrator, working in Sumpter Township is like conducting a constantly evolving experiment.

That's because the township is always balancing the conflict between development and concern for the environment and trying to develop new solutions.

Sumpter Township, with its abundant wetlands, faces extreme development challenges. But by working with the wetlands, residents can both help the environment and enjoy a better standard of living, Bowles said.

As one of the few remaining rural areas between Ann Arbor and Detroit, Sumpter Township is ripe for development. New houses, both stick-built and modular, are being built in the area. But along with the increase in residents comes a need for improving services while protecting the environment.

One example is installing sewers. The area's septic fields are nearing capacity, which means that water quality in the area is deteriorating, Bowles said.

In some smaller subdivisions where the homes are close together, problems with septic systems are very bad, Bowles said.

The township built the first phase of a sewer project in 1994, installing sewers on Willis Road between Rawsonville and Sumpter roads. The sewer project is funded by revenue from the new Carleton Farms landfill.

The township hopes to continue the sewer project along Sumpter Road south to Oakville-Waltz. That project might have to be done in several phases because of financing concerns arising from Wayne County's legal battle over capacity of the landfill.

Another example of trying to improve the environment and the quality of life is the drain-cleaning program. The township hopes to have this ambitious project finished by this fall.

The drains haven't been cleaned in more than 50 years, Bowles said. This means the water table in the area, which already is high, goes even higher. This makes properties unbuildable and also causes severe road deterioration.

But the drains are being cleaned out carefully. Although excavation is required for the drain program, the township is trying to save as many mature trees near the drains as possible.

The trees create shadows on the water surface in the drain. The protection from direct sunlight means "the critters (in the wa-

ter) will be able to grow," Bowles said. Over time, fishing will improve in the area, he said.

Another environmentally friendly project is a proposed golf course at the northwest corner of Arkona and Martinsville roads.

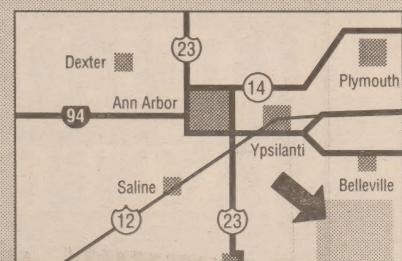
"We're going to show people how you can have a golf course and have a healthy thriving ecosystem at the same time," Bowles said. The course is being designed to work with the area's natural topography and maintain existing wetlands. Also, fewer chemicals will be used in the maintenance of the course, Bowles said.

Another environmental concern is a small lake at Sherwood Park. Because of overused septic fields, the water quality in the lake is poor, Bowles said. Bowles hopes to build a drain system that would allow water to flow into a natural wetland area. The water would then percolate through the wetland, which would help clean the water.

"(This would) let the wetlands do what they do best," Bowles said.

In addition to working with the environment, the township also is working to provide more amenities for its growing population. A new fire hall is to be built on the corner of Kozma and Sumpter roads. Also, the township hopes to attract some commercial business in the upcoming year, such as a bank and laundry facility.

SUMPTER TOWNSHIP



POPULATION: 10,891

RACE: White 85% Black 14% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 34% \$25-\$75K: 59%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 91%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead, Van Buren Public Schools): 23.84; 1993: 60.44

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: City Management Inc., owner of City Sand and Carleton Farms landfill. Number of employees and taxes paid not available.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: The closure of City Sand landfill and plans to develop the landfill for recreational use. Also, completion of first phase of a new sewer project.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: The township hopes to continue building sewers, though financing may be more difficult than anticipated. There also are plans to build a new fire station.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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COMMUNITIES

Ann Arbor enjoys residential, commercial building boom

By KAREN EMERSON
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

When you talk about development in Ann Arbor, don't forget to use some "R" words.

Like recovering. Rejuvenated. Rebounded. Renewed.

After a couple of years of lagging construction figures, 1994 can be described with any of those words. By some estimates, the city will receive a better bill of health in the coming year.

All told, more than \$39 million in new construction — residential and commercial — happened in 1994. That's up from about \$30.6 million in 1993.

"Overall, it was a good year for construction," said Ann Arbor Building Director Jack Donaldson.

The biggest chunk of construction was residential, which accounted for more than \$32 million in business last year. It was the second year for the residential rebound.

Last year Ann Arbor's residential construction boom included:

- Nearly \$25.2 million in 215 single-family dwellings.

- More than \$2.7 million spent on 24 two-family units.

- More than \$2.1 million in seven townhouses with a total of 31 units.

- \$2.2 million for Sequoia Place, an affordable housing community for seniors that broke ground last year. Construction continues on the 56-unit project at the corner of North Maple and Sequoia Parkway. It is expected to open by late summer.

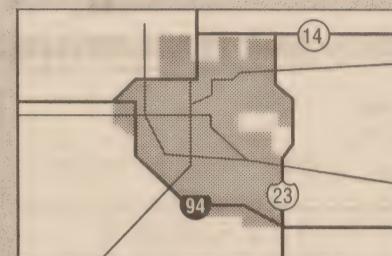
"It's going to be an attractive facility and not a warehouse for older people," said Carl E. Thomas, president of Lutheran Social Services of Michigan. The non-profit organization is jointly sponsoring Sequoia Place with Ann Arbor's Trinity and Zion Lutheran churches.

Other key housing developments in Ann Arbor for 1995 include work at Arbor Hills, off Green Road. Construction started last year on about 220 condominiums.

Donaldson said Ann Arborites should look to the city's north and northwest parcels for new development, too. He said the long-awaited annexation agreement with Ann Arbor Township could lead to more residential development.

Donaldson attributes the growth, in part, to interest rates. He said the city can expect continued growth and new development —

ANN ARBOR



POPULATION: 109,592

RACE: White 82% Black 9% Asian 8% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 38% \$25K-\$75K: 47%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 43%

MILLAGE: 1994 (homestead): 49.97; 1993: 63.32

LARGEST EMPLOYER: University of Michigan: 1994: 32,443; 1993: 32,904.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Parke-Davis, \$2.62 million in 1994. 1993: \$2.92 million.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Ongoing residential development at Foxfire, Oak Brook and Turnberry; new downtown Border's superstore and corporate office.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Ann Arbor Hills residential development off Green Road; potential development in city's north/northwest side with annexation agreement with Ann Arbor Township.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

unless the Federal Reserve significantly hikes interest rates and discourages would-be developers.

Commercial development in Ann Arbor also increased in 1994, according to city figures. More than \$6.9 million was spent at 15 sites.

That compares to \$1.25 million in 1993 and \$2.3 million in 1992.

But it's still down from 1988-91, when more than \$124 million was spent.

One of 1994's key commercial developments was the new Borders book and music superstore in the former downtown Jacobson's site, he said.



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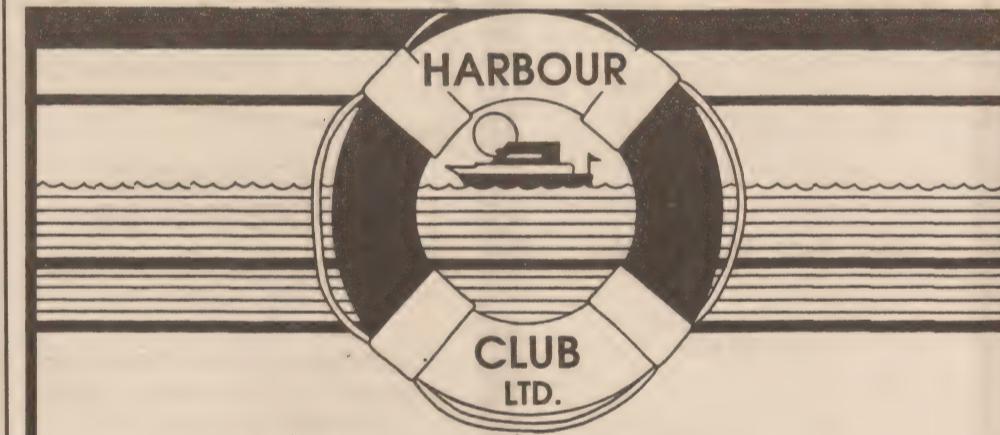
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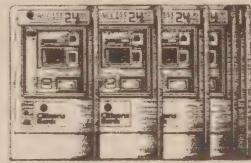


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COMMUNITIES

Augusta Twp. keeps its focus on residential

By DAN BEDORE
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

Infrastructure is the key to rural Augusta Township's plans for the future.

With virtually no commercial industrial tax base, Augusta officials were busy improving services to residents in 1994 and look for more of the same in 1995.

Among last year's improvements, MichCon installed 22 miles of natural gas mains in the township.

Township Clerk Carol Kovalak said that will spur business for local heating and cooling contractors as well as plumbers and other home improvement trades.

This year, the township expects to seek bids for the \$6.8 million water main project by the end of March. The project — following discussion over whether it should entail setting up a special assessment district — includes 29 miles of water mains in the southeastern corner of the township, where residents have experienced a rash of dry and poor wells.

"The water district (project) really went well," said Kovalak. "It will take care of a critical health problem. I expect a great deal of small contractors, plumbers and local suppliers will benefit as well."

Kovalak said she would like to see a small factory or industrial park come to the



NEWS PHOTO • WILLIAM JORDAN

Project engineer Cliff Goodman (left) and school board Vice President Sandy Olsen review progress on the new Lincoln middle school.

township.

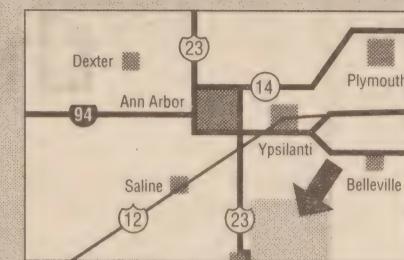
The year's main commercial development in Augusta Township is a multi-use gas station and retail complex being built at the corner of Rawsonville and Willis roads.

Developer Sami Salame says the 7,200-square-foot facility also will house a coin laundry, a Dunkin' Donut franchise and an ice cream parlor. He said a minimum of 10 people will be employed at the facility, which he expects to complete in April.

Significant development in the township also comes from Lincoln Consolidated Schools, which is the largest employer in the township with 13 administrative, 191 faculty and 217 support jobs.

The school district passed a \$25 million bond issue in February 1994 for renovations to school buildings and for the construction of a new middle school adjacent to the existing high school. The middle school, now under construction, will hold up to 1,150 pupils.

AUGUSTA TOWNSHIP



POPULATION: 4,415

RACE: White 93% Black 6% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 23% \$25-\$75K: 61%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 89%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in Lincoln School District): 43.9; 1993: 57.79

LARGEST EMPLOYER: The Lincoln Consolidated School District employs 421 people.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Completion of Tuttle Hill Bridge and installation of 22 miles of natural gas lines by MichCon.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Completion of a new middle school building on Willis Road. A 29-mile water main extension project will begin in the spring. S.A.S. Inc. will open a multi-purpose gas station and retail facility currently under construction.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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COMMUNITIES

Van Buren to widen road for new subdivisions

By MARJORIE KAUTH-KARJALA
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

Van Buren Township is set for an explosion of residential housing this year, with several new subdivisions planned or under way.

The growth in housing is one element of a three-pronged plan to bring a balance of residential, commercial and industrial development to the township, said Cameron McInally, township developmental services director.

The township is meeting the expected growth with a variety of plans, said McInally.

One of the chief developments of 1994 was the beginning of a mammoth construction project that will widen Belleville Road from I-94 south to the Belleville Road bridge.

The project began last summer and is expected to be completed in the fall. The township also is working on expanding Belleville Road from I-94 north to Tyler Road.

Wayne County will do the construction, but the township is responsible for buying the property needed for the expansion, McInally said.

Supervisor David Jacokes echoed the importance of the road widening.

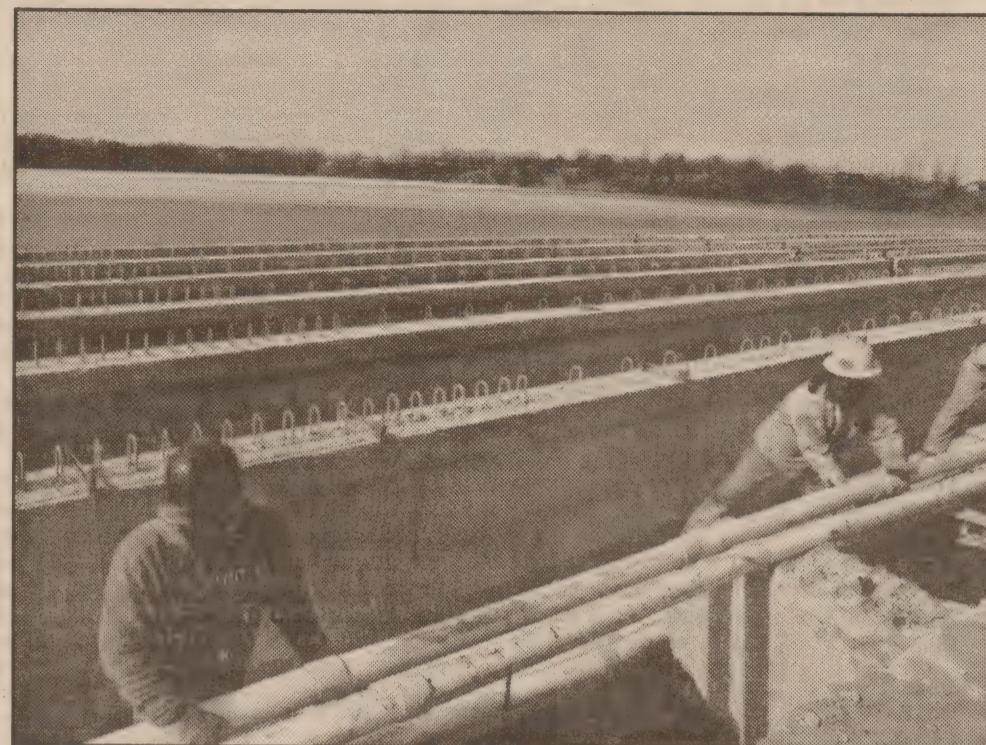
"The traffic right now between the North I-94 Service Drive and Tyler Road is horrendous," Jacokes said.

The township also is preparing for growth with an expanded municipal complex, on which construction is expected to start this spring, said McInally.

The project will expand and renovate the existing township hall at 46425 Tyler Road. The building will include recreation and senior activities. The recreation facility should be completed by fall of this year, McInally said.

The township is looking to renovate the former township hall in downtown Belleville. With the building now housing the Chamber of Commerce and two private businesses, officials are looking to move the Belleville Area Museum into it.

The museum is now located in the former Quirk School, along with September Days



NEWS PHOTO - LINDA WAN

Workers lay pipe as part of the project to widen Belleville Road.

Senior Center and preschool classes. Quirk was sold to the Downtown Development Authority, which is considering demolishing the building.

Meanwhile, in the last several years, industrial development has been the primary focus, with several new businesses being built along Haggerty Road.

Now, with the growth of residential housing, commercial vacancies are beginning to fill up, said McInally.

Van Buren Plaza, on Belleville Road south of I-94, is one example of how commercial space is being occupied.

Built in the late 1980s, the plaza had trouble attracting merchants. Now nearly all the storefronts are filled. This growth remained steady even with construction on Belleville Road last fall, making access into the plaza difficult, McInally said.

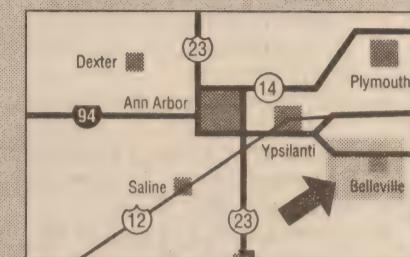
Vacancies at Lakewood Center, the township's oldest strip mall, also mostly have been filled. The vacancy created by the departure of the China King restaurant last year has been replaced with the expansion of Marianne's clothing store. However, a large space adjacent to Dunham's sporting goods store remains vacant.

An Arby's restaurant is planned for the North I-94 Service Drive, just east of the Belleville Square Plaza.

Other continuing concerns in the township involve the planned cleanup of Willow Creek, which is on the west side of the township. The cleanup is to be handled by several parties who were determined to be responsible for contamination.

Because Van Buren was not named as a responsible party, the township has no financial responsibility for the cleanup.

VAN BUREN TWP.



POPULATION: 21,010

RACE: White 90% Black 8% Asian 1% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 28% \$25-\$75K: 62%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 64%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead, Van Buren Public Schools): 28.90; 1993: 65.55

LARGEST EMPLOYER: NBD Bank technical center. Current employment not available, compared to about 1,900 a year ago.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Harbour Apartments. Taxes paid not available, compared to more than \$1 million a year ago.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: In an effort to cope with an expected population boom, widening of Belleville Road begins. Construction along the road is slated to last until at least 1996.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: The expansion and renovation of the township's municipal facility on Tyler Road is expected to begin this spring. The township's efforts to finance the project started in 1993.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

Another development issue facing the township is the proposed Willow Run Tradeport, a planned 6,700-acre industrial and technology park with Willow Run Airport at its center. Wayne and Washtenaw county officials announced the plan more than two years ago in reaction to the announced shut-down of the General Motors Corp. Willow Run Assembly plant.

McAuley continues building boom with new orthopedic center

By JANET MILLER
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

It was a booming year for the Catherine McAuley Health System, with more of the same eyed in the new year for this health care mega-facility.

And a few miles to the southeast, Beyer Memorial Hospital — now known as Oakwood Hospital's Beyer Center — also has big plans for 1995.

Catherine McAuley Health System in 1994 saw the opening of the \$8 million Michigan Heart & Vascular Institute on the sprawling Superior Township campus of St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital.

Some 40 cardiac and vascular physicians financed this 86,000-square-foot facility, which houses an outpatient heart catheterization lab, cardiac rehabilitation, physician offices and more.

"It's a unique example of the kind of joint venture (between physicians and a health care facility)," said Jim Frenza, public affairs and marketing officer for Catherine McAuley.

So far, the effort has paid off.

"St. Joe's has become a very important center for cardiac services," said Frenza.

Catherine McAuley Health System will enter into a joint operating agreement with Providence Hospital and Medical Centers and become Mission Health Corporation.

Physicians at the new facility perform the second-highest number of open heart procedures in the state.

Also new for 1994 was the opening of the nine-bed Chest Pain Center, adjacent to the Emergency Center. The Chest Pain Center is a shared program between the Michigan Heart and Vascular Institute and St. Joseph Mercy Hospital.

The Chest Pain Center, said Frenza, "is a really good example of health care reform." Because patients complaining of chest pain are now not automatically admitted to the hospital — they are diagnosed at the Chest Pain Center first — costs are reduced, said Frenza. "It saves a great deal of money for the patient, the insurance companies and the hospital ... It very much cuts down on hospital stays."

And 1995 will bring more growth, as the Michigan Orthopedic Center is scheduled to open in late winter. This \$10 million, three-story, 80,000-square-foot facility will house 28 orthopedic surgery and neurosurgery physicians, who financed the center.

Catherine McAuley Health System will enter into a joint operating agreement with Providence Hospital and Medical Centers, based in Southfield, and become Mission Health Corporation. While the individual hospitals will retain their names, the Catherine McAuley Health System title will give way to Mission Health.

However, the Catherine McAuley name, which honors the founder of the Sisters of Mercy hospitals, will not disappear from the campus. The Catherine McAuley Cancer Center and the Catherine McAuley Birth

Place will remain.

The joint operating agreement is nearly complete and will be announced officially in April. For its first year, there will be little change to notice, said Frenza, except for the building signs.

But eventually, he said, the facilities will be able to operate more efficiently as the management and clinical functions are integrated, said Frenza. "There will be the best of both organizations: Providence is strong in primary care. McAuley has an outstanding reputation for cardiac care, oncology and services to the aging."

While 1994 proved to be a busy year for Catherine McAuley, it wasn't an unusual year, said Frenza. "For around here, it wasn't unusually busy... We're always looking for ways to make things more efficient for patients," he said.

Meanwhile, Beyer has its eye on a renovated emergency room for 1995.

Officials hope to complete the \$600,000 renovation project this year. The project includes a new ambulance entrance, adding a trauma room and modernizing the lobby and treatment rooms. Groundbreaking for the project was in early December, with an early summer completion date.

COMMUNITIES

Builders keep finding Pittsfield Township

By JOHN NIYO
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Pittsfield Township has been processing a lot of new building permits recently, including one for itself.

By next fall, Pittsfield Township administrators hope to be moving out of cramped space at 701 W. Ellsworth Road, and into a new, larger building at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Platt Road.

The move is simply a sign of the times in the township, which officials say is the fastest-growing municipality in Washtenaw County and the eighth-fastest in southeastern Michigan.

The growth "does make for a bit of trepidation," joked Doug Woolley, who took over as township supervisor when E.A. Jackson Morris retired Feb. 4. Woolley had been a township trustee for 20 years prior to that.

Pittsfield Township — in a rapid-growth triangle between Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and Saline — has exploded with development and new housing in the last decade. Ann Arbor might be running out of available land, Woolley said, but builders apparently aren't running out of customers.

Subdivisions and condominiums — in various stages of construction — continue to grow like mushrooms in the area. Some have been growing steadily over the years — Stonebridge is about a third of the way to its projected 711 homes surrounding a golf course — while others are still in the planning stages.

"But," Woolley notes, "they're not build-

ing these on speculation. They're not building most of these until they are bought."

Pittsfield Township issued 2,897 permits in 1994, up 41 percent from the 2,051 handed out in 1993, according to Jack Williams, zoning and building administrator.

That 1994 number includes a record 840 building permits, up 32 percent from the previous high of 635 in 1993. Williams said there were 360 new houses planned in 1994, a 35 percent increase from the 266 in 1993.

"I knew we were busy," Williams said with a laugh. "But I didn't realize we'd been that busy ... until I added it up the other day."

His calculator hasn't stopped humming.

"With the economy the way it is, I think we'll have a hard time exceeding that this year," Williams said of last year's numbers. "But I don't see things slowing down, either."

Robert Skrobola, the township treasurer, agrees. He estimates the numbers will be high again this year, "and then, I think, we might hit the other side of the bell curve."

All this, though, begs a question.

"One has to wonder, 'Where is it coming from?'" Skrobola says of the demand for all the development.

He cites the increase in employment in the Ann Arbor area as one possible explanation and notes that many of the residents in the new subdivisions in Pittsfield are commuters — automobile industry employees working in Dearborn, for example.

"We're not going out and telling people, 'Come to Pittsfield, the Land of Opportuni-

ty,'" Skrobola said. "These people are seeking us out."

People like Jim Brien, whose Good Sports Arena, a three-rink ice arena, recently received approval from the township planning commission for a site plan to build the project at the intersection of Oak Valley Drive and Scio Church Road.

The arena will have two National Hockey League-size rinks and one Olympic-size rink for figure skating and have room for approximately 2,200 spectators. There also will be ballet and nautilus equipment areas, locker rooms, concession stands and a restaurant.

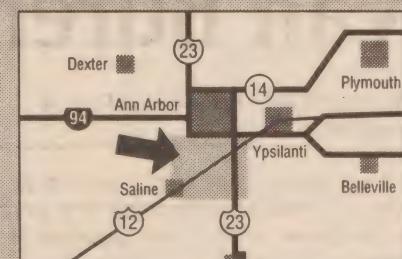
For a project this big, Pittsfield Township — at the intersections of I-94, US-23 and US-12 — was the only answer.

"In the city of Ann Arbor," Brien said, "I don't think I could find a 15-acre site that's zoned properly, with the right topography."

Construction in the township will continue in 1995 on several housing developments, including Hawthorne Ridge, Arbor Creek, Boulder Ridge (formerly Andover Ridge), St. James Woods subdivision and the 640-acre Stonebridge. Arbor Ridge, with a projected 319 units, also is on the slate for this year.

The change at the top, with Woolley succeeding Morris, shouldn't hamper any of the township's progress, officials say. Morris announced his plan to retire last November. The board appointed Woolley — no stranger after two decades as a trustee — his successor. He began making the transition in mid-January.

PITTSFIELD TWP.



POPULATION: 17,668

RACE: White 78% Black 17% Asian 4% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 32% \$25-\$75K: 56%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 40%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead for Ann Arbor schools): 38.4; 1993: 51.7

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: NSK Corp., some 350 employees, about the same as a year ago. Paid \$933,784 in property taxes in 1994, compared to about \$1.75 million in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Continuing phases of the following residential developments: Arbor Creek, Boulder Ridge (formerly Andover Ridge), Deerfield Partnership, Hawthorne Ridge, St. James Woods, Stonebridge, Willow Creek.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS:

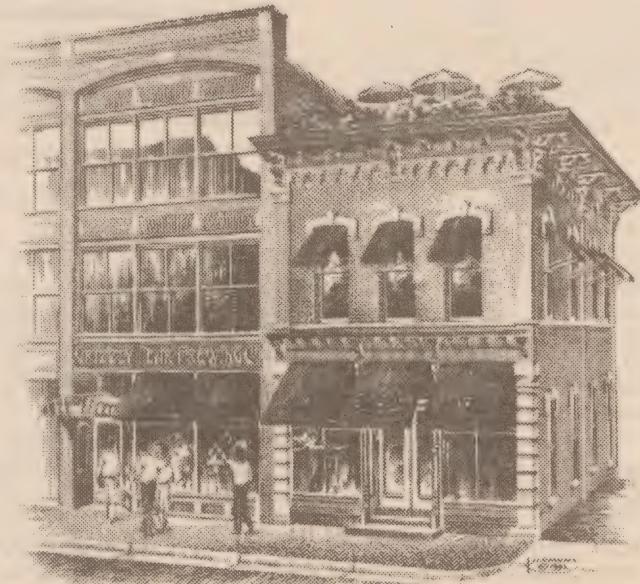
Residential construction will continue on most of the developments listed above, along with new projects, including Crystal Creek, Silverleaf and Arbor Ridge (319 total units planned). Other planned developments include an ice arena and a new township hall.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census



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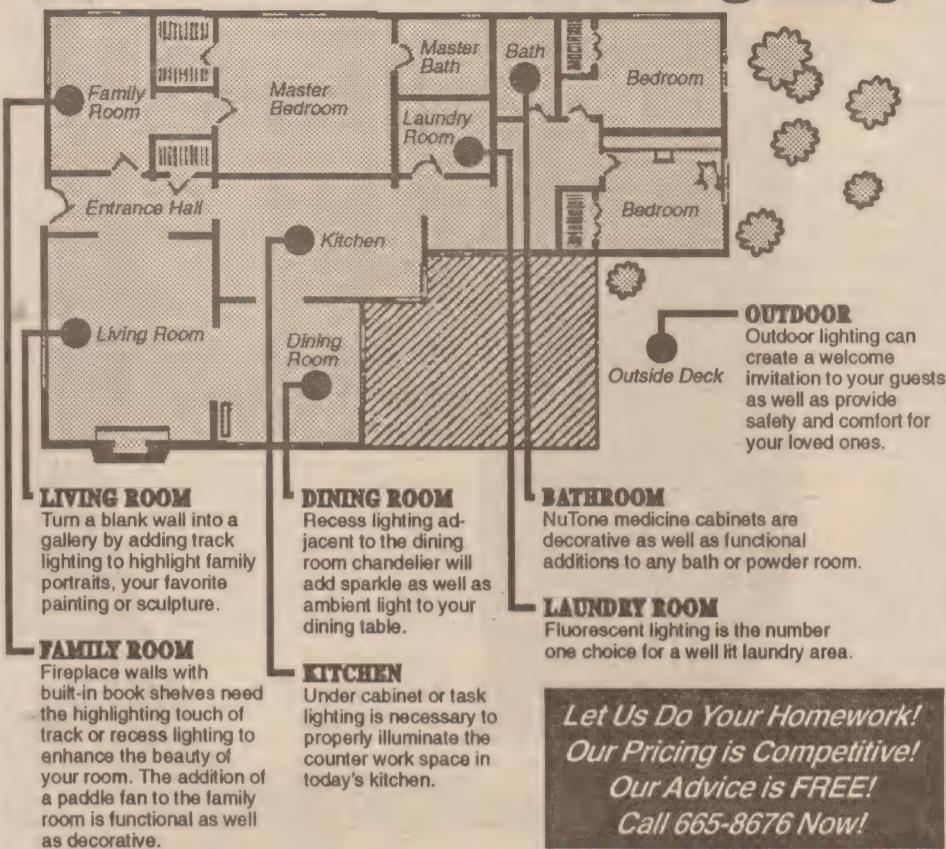


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COMMUNITIES

In Scio, growth sprouts two ways

■ Township wants commercial, industrial investments, but slow residential growth.

By BETH ANNE HARRIS
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

They've said it before and they're saying it again — slow growth is good growth for Scio Township.

"The great majority of those in the township have a strong preference for slow growth. We would be happy to see large developments go elsewhere," said Township Supervisor Robert Tickle.

According to Tickle, Scio Township has two policies regarding growth: residential growth should be slow and low-density while commercial and industrial growth, particularly along the Jackson Road corridor, should be high-density and encouraged.

"We are encouraging clean, high-quality, light industrial growth (on Jackson Road). We're not trying to discourage growth on that road," Tickle said.

And, according to Tickle, expansion is in the future for the Scio Township portion of Jackson Road: a \$30-35 million project that will turn the commercial and industrial road into a boulevard. So far, \$8 million worth of bonds have been sold to finance Phase One of the improvement plan, which should begin within a few months, Tickle said. Actual pouring of the concrete will begin in 1996.

"After the turn of the century, which is not far off, traffic conditions will be approaching gridlock. It is essential to continue economic growth and that we take steps to up-grade the conditions," Tickle said. "This is the biggest project to happen here."

The long-range project will probably span the next few years, according to Tickle. Jackson Road will eventually have two lanes on either side separated by "an attractively landscaped median," Tickle said. The project will refurbish the five-mile stretch from Wagner Road to Parker Road, an area that will most likely see a lot of development in the years to come, Tickle said. The project was initiated by the Scio Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Also slated for construction this year is Jackson Square, a 5.4-acre site on Jackson road that will include office and retail developments. Ultimately, seven buildings will be constructed covering about 20,000 square feet of commercial space and more than 23,000 square feet of office space.

According to Tickle, numerous addition and renovation projects of buildings were undertaken in 1994 and should continue into this year.

"We had a fair number of additions and modifications (in 1993). There has been a whole raft of additions and expansions but no new buildings," Tickle said.

One project that had been stuck in the

SCIO TOWNSHIP



POPULATION: 11,077

RACE: White 95% Black 2% Asian 2% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 18% \$25-\$75K: 54%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 86%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead, Ann Arbor School District): 34.18; 1993: 47.48

LARGEST EMPLOYER: University Microfilms International

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Sarns 3M, about \$360,000, compared to some 500,000 in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Work began on Polo Fields, combination housing and 18-hole golf course; Scio Downtown Development Authority okays bond sale to finance \$8 million Phase One of the Jackson Road Boulevard Project.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Construction scheduled to begin in May of the Boulevard Project to widen Jackson Road to two lanes on either side with a landscaped median. Jackson Square, a mixed use office and retail development, scheduled for completion.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

sand in previous years received a boost in 1994 — the Polo Fields golf course project experienced a shift in management and Tickle said he projects completion of the combination 18-hole golf course and residential development this year.

According to Mike Schepers, township manager, Polo Fields will ultimately include 340 apartments in 12 buildings. Lots at Polo Fields cost between \$70,000 and \$80,000.

Membership fees at the club cost \$5,000 plus minimal monthly dues. Tickle said that 22-25 homes have been completed so far. The development, located south of Park Road, will feature 36,000 square feet of space with a pool, tennis courts, health facility, pro shop and banquet facilities. Polo Fields was previously known as Saginaw Greens, but that project failed.

Although trying to maintain slow growth, a large residential project is planned for 1995. Arbor Ridge, a development still in its infancy stage, is a project that will contain 178 single family homes upon completion. The development will be located in the northwest quadrant of the township off of Park and Zeeb roads.

"We try to contain growth so that the vast majority of this township maintains its rural character," Schepers said.

'The great majority of those in the township have a strong preference for slow growth. We would be happy to see large developments go elsewhere.'

— Scio Township Supervisor Robert Tickle

COMMUNITIES

Slow-to-grow township embraces outpatient clinic

■ U-M's plans to build medical complex gives big boost to struggling Ann Arbor Technology park.

By JOHN NIYO
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Ann Arbor Township does not embrace growth and change the way some area communities do, but officials there are welcoming the University of Michigan's latest major project into their peaceful neighborhood.

The U-M has paid some \$20 million for 388 acres in the Ann Arbor Technology Park, where it plans to build a new outpatient campus of several buildings during the next few years. Construction for the first building is expected to begin later this spring, with opening in spring 1996.

But even though the U-M's project represents a major undertaking at the 620-acre development, Elizabeth Langford, the township's supervisor since 1988, says it's considerably better than the alternative.

"It was zoned commercial," Langford says with an exasperated tone about the land U-M bought along the south side of Plymouth Road east of US-23. "I don't know what we would have done."

It was, she says, either an outpatient clinic... or a Meijer.

Entry by the U-M represents a dramatic turnaround for the troubled 620-acre park, which went into default in 1990 after the original developer defrauded investors.

The park's main creditor — the state's pension fund — took over the development in 1991 but progress had been slow until U-M announced its blockbuster deal about a year ago.

Still, the U-M hasn't been the only good news for Ann Arbor Township, which saw residential developments continue growing last year in the area of Dixboro and Geddes roads. That includes the completion of Laurel Gardens condominiums and continuing progress at the Fleming Creek subdivision.

But in Ann Arbor Township less is always more.

"We're not 'no growth,' but we're 'slow growth.' We really are trying to protect this area as a rural greenbelt," Langford said.

Nonetheless, the U-M outpatient campus is expected to grow fairly quickly.

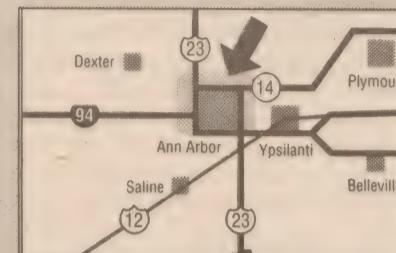
The center of the planned U-M facility is concentrated on about 190 acres fronting Plymouth Road. University planner Fred Mayer said the first building will be up to 65,000 square feet, though he disclosed no other details.

University officials have said the 3-story building will take over for much of the outpatient care now performed at the crowded medical campus at University Hospitals in Ann Arbor. The new clinic also will include viewing rooms so it can be used to train medical students.

The target date to break ground is sometime this spring, and Medical School administrator Anne Ferris says the doors should open for patients by May 1996. The U-M is finishing up an overall evaluation right now, studying land-use patterns, wetlands preservation and other concerns.

The reason behind the project is simple. "With the health care environment

ANN ARBOR TWP.



POPULATION: 3,793

RACE: White 92% Asian 4% Black 3% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 13% \$25-\$75K: 50%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 66%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: (Homestead): 36.55; 1993: 49.78

LARGEST EMPLOYER AND TAXPAYER:

Domino's Pizza headquarters employees: 1994: 503 1993: 512; Domino's property taxes: 1994 \$1.6 million. 1993: \$1.8 million.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: First phase of Fleming Creek subdivision at Dixboro and Plymouth roads; Final phase of Laurel Gardens condominiums on Geddes.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Initial development of U-M Hospitals outpatient facility in Ann Arbor Technology Park.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

changing over the last year or so," Mayer says, "I think they felt they needed to take a more aggressive stance on primary care."

And for the patients?

They get a "much more comprehensive" primary care facility than any of the current available options, say university officials. Among the extras at the new northeast health center is an education resource center, where patients can get prevention and treatment information from health care educators and computers.

Another bonus is the location, near both US-23 and M-14, which will allow patients from outside of Ann Arbor a relatively easy trip. The current route to the U-M Medical Center is anything but easy. Mayer refers to it as a "labyrinth," although some visitors probably use harsher language.

Mayer says that is all part of a plan to make the medical facility more "user-friendly."

The university's plan calls for buildings to be "on a comfortable scale," with the emphasis on "non-intimidating" architecture.

"That means no more than two or three stories," Mayer says, using brick and slate — not steel — with plenty of room for landscaping and plenty of parking spots.

Now, that sounds like an Ann Arbor Township resident.

Keep the growth at a minimum, keep it unobtrusive... "and no commercial," Langford says.

"The developers from Southfield keep hounding me," she says. "But I just tell them, 'No.'"

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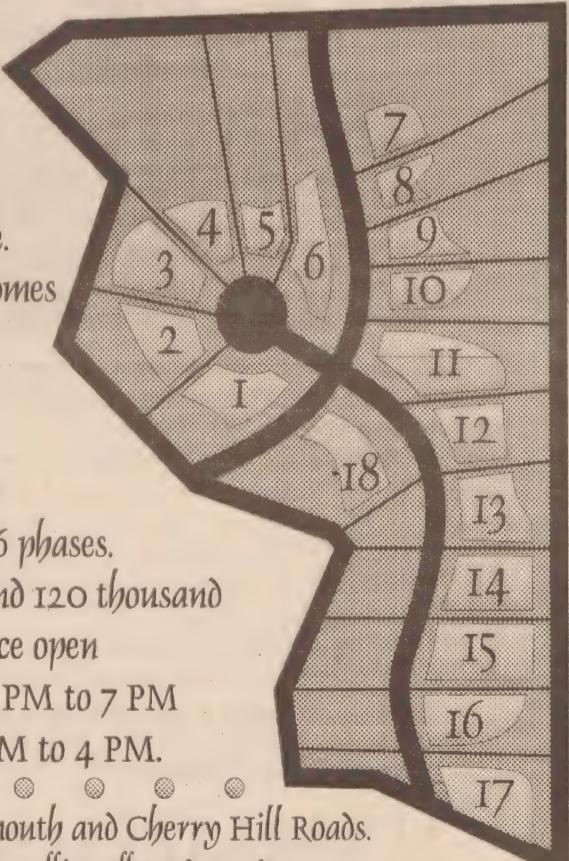
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COMMUNITIES

WORLD CLASS

Tecumseh schools' international honor stands out in status-quo year

By SUSAN JANE GILMAN
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

While business in Tecumseh remained relatively unchanged during the past year, the town's school system became the jewel in its crown.

Last July, the International Conference of Leadership and Education selected the Tecumseh public schools as a "model school system." A team of Tecumseh teachers, administrators, town leaders and business people will represent the district at the ICLE's third annual Model Schools Conference in Cincinnati this June.

"We were chosen because we're moving on a number of fronts to improve our schools," says Jerry Pound, district superintendent. "It's a tremendous honor. We're a little taken aback."

The Tecumseh system serves about 3,100 students. It consists of three K-4 elementary schools, a fifth grade center, a middle school, and a high school for grades 9-12.

In 1994, the system developed what Pound calls "a transformational change model," designed to improve the overall quality of education. This model advocates using collective bargaining with employees so that teachers and staff do not become adversaries of the administration, building partnerships with local businesses to increase the system's resources and commun-

nity involvement, and evaluating and improving the schools' curriculums systematically.

"The basic principles of the model are to treat people well, to share decision making, and to build community partnerships," says Pound, who notes that such changes are still in the formative stage. He says he hopes they can be implemented in the next few years. Then, Tecumseh's schools will offer higher quality education, have state-of-the-art technology and enjoy better relations with the community as a whole.

"We're really just beginning to train our staff in the philosophy," Pound says. "We've got a long way to go."

Yet the school system is not the only institution in Tecumseh that has actively worked to better serve the community. Herrick Memorial Hospital also spent 1994 striving to "get more in touch with the community," says Mark Wolfe, the hospital's financial officer.

The hospital, a small, not-for-profit institution with 106 beds and about 450 employees, "has been holding town meetings long before Bill Clinton ever did," according to Wolfe.

Last year, it "sat down with employers, schools, the police department and business leaders" in a "team effort" to improve itself on a number of fronts — and to provide services at the lowest possible cost.

"If employers can't afford health care with us, they'll go elsewhere, and that's an economic disservice to the entire community," Wolfe explains.

A pulmonary rehabilitation clinic has been developed, and the outpatient cardiology program has been improved.

The hospital also has put the word out about its fitness program: Herrick has a fully equipped gym and low-cost fitness memberships available to the entire community.

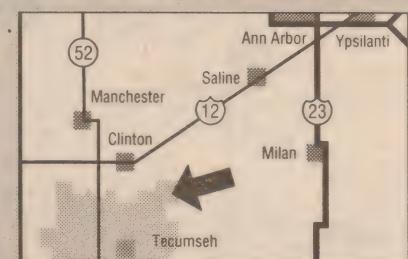
This year, Herrick Memorial plans to continue renovations it began on its Ob/Gyn Department in 1994. It will also be refurbishing its emergency room. "The whole campaign is about putting the customer in focus and honoring the integrity of the patients," says Wolfe. "We're a small town hospital. Privacy can be a real issue. We need to be sensitive."

Beyond that, the biggest news in Tecumseh has been the expansion of its largest company, Tecumseh Products, which has provided the town with approximately 100 new jobs.

The town's only bookstore, Godfrey Books, is closing after three years, but may be replaced by another. Seventeen new homes have also been constructed.

But other than that, says Kerry Smith, of the Tecumseh Chamber of Commerce, "It's been pretty much the status quo here."

TECUMSEH SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 16,146

RACE: White 97% Asian 1% Other 2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 33% \$25-\$75K: 60%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 79%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in village of Tecumseh): 29.40; 1993: 64.79

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Tecumseh Products, Co., about 1,100 employees, compared to some 1,000 employees the year before; company paid \$527,370 in property taxes in 1994, compared to \$562,418 in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Tecumseh Products Co. completes expansion, constructing 94,000-square-foot building, hiring about 100 additional employees.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Businesses form partnerships with schools and Herrick Memorial Hospital to improve community services. Hospital completes first renovations of Ob-Gyn Department.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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Winans Jewelry circa 1905 with current owner Rob Winans' great grandfather, Albert, grandfather Elmer and Albert's cousin, Warren Geddes.

COMMUNITIES

CLINTON SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 5,432

RACE: White 99% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 28% \$25-\$75K: 60%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 84%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in village of Clinton): 32.24; 1993: 54.03

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Libbey-Owens-Ford Modular Products with some 400 employees, about the same as 1993; Company paid \$25,737 in village property taxes in 1994, compared to \$26,836 in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Peerless Gear and Machine Division of Tecumseh Products reopened as Tecumseh Products After Marketing Division. The plant, which cost Clinton some 300 jobs when it closed in 1993, now has about 25 employees. Tenpenny furniture store closed.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: New parking lot behind Clinton Inn. Antiques mall planned in building that housed former Tenpenny furniture store.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

Venture and endurance in Clinton

SUSAN JANE GILMAN
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

CLINTON — Business has literally been sweeter in Clinton, thanks to Boomers II restaurant that opened in 1994, along with four other ventures.

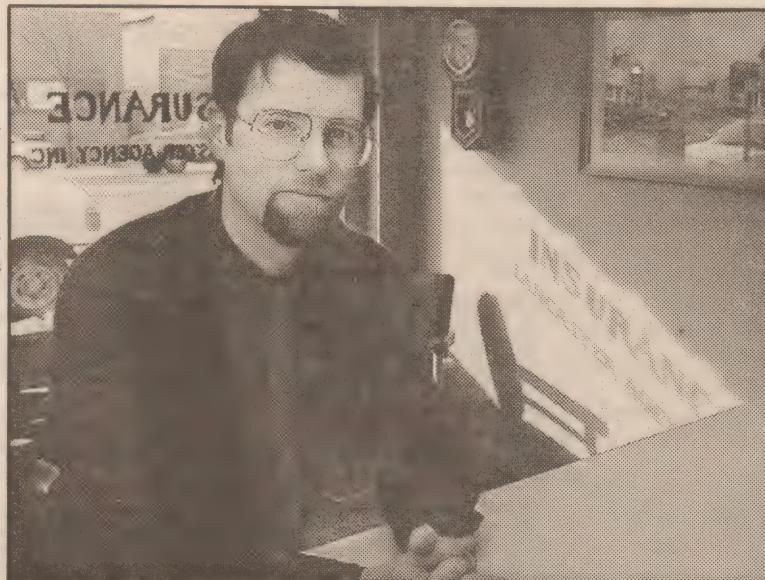
With its half-pound super boomer hamburgers, a two-page ice cream menu and 100 varieties of milkshakes, Boomers II offers a delectable rebellion against the low-fat diet craze.

In addition to expanding local waistlines, Boomers II has fattened up the town's payroll by employing 12 young people. It has also provided its manager, Clintonite Kelly Vertin, with the opportunity to become a restaurant owner herself.

The idea was that we should open a restaurant for Kelly, says Bob Bloomfield, the owner of Boomers II and its parent restaurant, Boomers, which is located in Tecumseh. Vertin was the top waitress for six years at the Tecumseh Boomers, Bloomfield says, yet she was growing restless for lack of advancement opportunities. In order to keep such a valued employee in the company, Bloomfield and his wife, Marilyn, decided to open a second Boomers in Clinton for Vertin to manage — and eventually buy.

Other businesses also put down roots in the community in 1994. O'Hara's Chrysler dealership opened in the town, as did a Subway Sandwiches, a Dairy Queen and a building company called Your House.

While Tenpenny, a furniture store off US-



Lancaster Insurance hit 50 years of age this year. J.D. Lancaster took over the agency from his father.

NEWS PHOTO
ROBERT CHASE

12, closed, its site is currently being renovated to house a large antiques mall scheduled to open in May. Vendors will buy booths in the mall to sell their goods, says Cheryl Matzinger, president of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce, who hopes the mall will further the economic growth trend.

Also reassuring was the reopening of a company that shut its doors in 1993. The Peerless Gear and Machine Division of Tecumseh Products, whose closing cost Clinton 300 jobs, reopened as the Tecumseh Products After Marketing Division. But the

new operation only has about 30 employees.

In yet another sign of economic endurance, Lancaster Agency and Associates, an insurance agency that Matzinger calls the pillar of the community, celebrated its 50th anniversary in Clinton last November.

Real estate also has done well. Says Village Manager Kevin Cornish: "Houses in the area are selling really fast. We're seeing people put their houses up for sale, and they're gone within a month. The subdivision immediately south of us is selling real fast, too."

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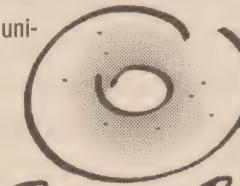
Barrys is proud to be able to give back to the community for their loyalty throughout the years. We were featured in independent business magazine recently for being a business that makes donations a regular part of their business, helping out schools, charities, and other non profit organizations.

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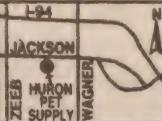
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and operational by the end of March.

"We have research and development activities in three buildings in Manchester. This project is an effort to bring everything under one roof and to upgrade some of the other facilities," Steel said. She added that ultimately about 90 people will be employed in the new facility.

But the village of Manchester has a hard-working, industrial face as well, with expansion projects and new facilities cropping up in the farmland acres surrounding the village.

Johnson Controls' Plastic Technology Group is nearing completion of a \$5 million, 88,000-square-foot research and development center, which will act as a complement to the company's production facility located just north of the new center. Shelly Steel, project manager for the new facility, says that the center should be completed



NEWS PHOTO • ROBERT CHASE

As president of Manchester's Chamber of Commerce, Jim Achtenberg is among those who promote the village's Victorian theme.

A village preserves its Victorian feel

By BETH ANNE HARRIS

NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

Quaint antique shops and weathered old buildings line the streets of the charming Victorian village of Manchester, and the residents of this village, situated in southwest Washtenaw County, are striving to keep it in this condition.

The Victorian village theme has been promoted by Jim Achtenberg, who has served as Chamber of Commerce president for the past two years, and has been consciously kept intact by the less than 2,000 residents of this community along the River Raisin. Achtenberg moved his business, Woodbrook Enterprises computer store, from Ann Arbor to Manchester, where he has lived for nine years. His wife operates April Victoria in the same building on Main Street, which sells handmade glycerin soaps and other products.

"We try to keep a small-town atmosphere. The government and people in town consciously try to do that," Achtenberg said.

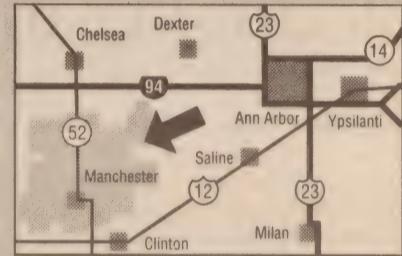
Achtenberg also said that people in the village are recognizing the unique Victorian qualities characteristic of the older days of Manchester, and are taking steps to recondition buildings to their previous appearances, such as the restored Haarer's Restaurant and the Village Tap downtown.

Strolling through downtown Manchester, visitors can find many specialty stores, including what residents refer to as "the old mill" — an actual mill that has eight specialty stores hidden behind its antique facade, including four antique shops. The Manchester Antique Mall on Main Street also is a good find for shoppers looking for antique merchandise — it has three levels of goodies that could tire out the most seasoned shopper.

"We have a lot of people coming through on the weekends. A lot of the draw to the area is the several antique stores. They do pretty well," said Village Manager Jeff Wallace.

But the village of Manchester has a hard-working, industrial face as well, with expansion projects and new facilities cropping up in the farmland acres surrounding the village.

MANCHESTER SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 5,526

RACE: White 99% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 25% \$25-\$75K: 61%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 83%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead): 38.48; 1993: 69.92

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER:

Johnson Controls, Inc., 560 employees in 1994, up from 516 in 1993; paid \$132,070 in property taxes last year, up from \$116,000 in taxes previous year.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Research and development expansion at Johnson Controls; ultimately will create 90 job positions.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS:

Renovation of Black Sheep new water filter system for iron removal.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

On Washtenaw Ave.

See MANCHESTER, Page 12

COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • LINDA WAN

About 13 commercial buildings are being renovated in downtown Saline.

Will growth harm Saline's charm?

By LIZ COBBS
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

SALINE — The steady flow of businesses and families to the Saline area has local officials wondering how to maintain the area's charm in the face of non-stop growth.

Development continued to increase in Saline in 1994. New homes were constructed, new businesses came to town and student enrollment in the Saline Area Schools climbed steadily throughout the year.

The current economic activity helps make Saline a viable area in terms of attracting visitors, said David Potter, the area's economic development director.

"We're concentrating on getting visitors," Potter said. "People are already coming through the area to go to the antique markets or other places here. Some people who are just driving down Michigan Avenue and find something that catches their eye and just stop."

Since last May, 17,000 copies of Saline's new promotional brochure, "Yesterday's Charm — Today's Appeal" have been sent to different parts of the state as part of a mass mailing. The brochures also have been available on request.

Not only is the area being promoted to people around Michigan, but also to local residents. "Many people who live in Saline don't know what's in Saline," Potter said.

City Superintendent Gary Roubal said there has been a lot happening in Saline.

"(1994) was a very busy year," he said. "We've had a lot of residential and commercial construction."

Although the final totals for 1994 were not complete at the end of January, residential and commercial construction figures stood at \$13 million, Roubal said. The 1993 total was \$15 million.

Among the activities included in the totals were:

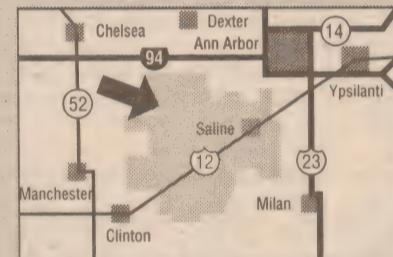
■ About 70 new homes were built in the city of Saline, about the same number in neighboring York Township and more than 100 in Lodi Township.

■ R & B Machine Tool Co. opened its new headquarters building in the industrial park on Woodland Drive.

■ The Saline District Library opened a new \$2.2 million building on Maple Road.

■ Ford Motor Company's Saline plant continued its \$120 million capital improvement project, which will be phased in

SALINE SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 14,904

RACE: White 98% Asian 1% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 19% \$25-\$75K: 59%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 80%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in city of Saline): 36.29; 1993: 62.7

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Ford Motor Company plant employs about 2,700 employees, compared to some 2,400 in 1993; paid \$2.8 million in total property taxes in 1994.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: About 240 new homes were constructed in the city of Saline, York Township and Lodi Township. R & B Machine Tool Co. opened its new headquarters in the Woodland Drive industrial park. Saline District Library opened up a new \$2.2 million building at Maple Road.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: A \$1.5 million renovation project of about 13 commercial buildings at Michigan Avenue and Ann Arbor streets by Bill Kinley, president of Phoenix Construction in Ypsilanti, is expected to add about 36 shops or offices to the downtown area and about 130 jobs.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

through 1997. A parking and storage area was put in behind the plant to coordinate the transporting of materials in and out of the plant. Space is available for about 350 trucks.

A number of proposed projects are already lining up for 1995, Roubal said. Among them are:

■ The renovation of about 13 commercial buildings at Michigan Avenue and Ann Arbor streets by Bill Kinley, president of Phoenix Construction. The \$1.5 million project is expected to add about 36 shops or offices to

See SALINE, Page 15

The Outlook is Bright on

Washtenaw Ave

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COMMUNITIES

Canton wants to complete big projects

By MARILYN TRUMPER-SAMRA

CANTON — The year 1994 was one of unprecedented growth and metamorphosis for Canton Township.

Now officials are struggling with how to preserve the butterfly.

■ A record 773 building permits were issued for new homes in '94, leading the Detroit metropolitan area in new home construction.

■ Construction of the township's \$13 million community center, the Summit, is well under way, slated for a late fall opening complete with indoor track, banquet facilities and pools.

■ \$3.5 million levied in a special business district tax built a "downtown" area beginning at Sheldon Road and running eastward along Ford Road to Morton-Taylor Road. Verdigris street lights, masonry walls and new landscaping mark the boundaries giving the busy thoroughfare new interest and character.

■ Industrially, 23 projects totaling \$18.67 million were built in '94, capping 652,000 square feet primarily in the Ronda Drive-Koppernick Road-Haggerty Road corridor area. Gil-Mar moved its world



NEWS PHOTO • LON HORWEDEL

Supervisor Tom Yack and Canton Township's new community center.

headquarters from Farmington Hills to Canton, completing a \$1.8 million auto-truck parts manufacturing plant on Ronda Drive.

■ On the commercial front, strip malls filled in, leaving few vacancies with developers proposing construction of three more such malls; new restaurants such as Applebee's and Damon's opened for business; and a new Home Depot opened this past summer anchoring the township's east end commercial district.

Something's got to give, says township Supervisor Tom Yack.

"I've taken a blood oath not to introduce one single new project in 1995," he said. "We want to finish up what we have going,

the Summit, our golf course Pheasant Run, the downtown. We didn't think roads would be an issue until '96, but they are, and because of the rapid growth according to the survey, people want improvements."

Anticipating a gasoline tax increase coupled with a matching funds program, the township wants to be ready, Yack said.

A big battle could be shaping up to thwart a proposed \$15 million medical waste incinerator — Highland Co-Gen — that could conceivably handle medical waste and radioactive materials. The 70,000-square-foot facility could go on DeWitt Road, an industrial spur south of Michigan Avenue, near Belleville Road.

CANTON TOWNSHIP



POPULATION: 57,040

RACE: White 93% Asian 5% Black 2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 21% \$25-\$75K: 63%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 73%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: (Plymouth-Canton Schools, Homestead) 1994: 31.11; 1993: 58.06

LARGEST EMPLOYER: Plymouth-Canton School District 1,386 full- and part-time people, up 27 from previous year.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Detroit Edison Co., \$869,514 in 1993 (township officials said 1994 taxes have not been calculated).

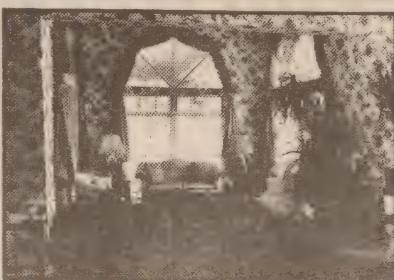
KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: 773 single family home building permits issued in 1994, compared to some 450 in 1993; \$3.5 million downtown district takes shape with streetlights, masonry walls and other improvements.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Township officials consider a road millage and possible battle to block construction of a medical waste incinerator; Late fall opening expected of \$13 million community center.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • LARRY E. WRIGHT

Steve Guile, head of Plymouth's Downtown Development Authority.

Plymouth ready for 'renaissance year'

■ Downtown's stores are full, and 'Victorian period condos' around Wilcox Home will help keep city's historic flavor.

By MARILYN TRUMPER-SAMRA
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

PLYMOUTH — The viability of historic downtown Plymouth will always be key to Plymouth Township.

It's from the quaint city that the surrounding community draws its identity.

This year, the director of the city's Downtown Development Authority promises a "renaissance." There's good news across the board.

"This will be the biggest year for change that the city has seen in years," said Steve Guile. "It really will be a renaissance year."

A spring ground-breaking is planned for 125 condominium units on 3.5 acres surrounding the massive, white Victorian Wilcox Home on Kellogg Park, built at the turn of the century.

The historically accurate period condominiums will range in size from 1,000 to 1,500 square feet and probably cost between \$84,000 and \$115,000. The Wilcox Home will remain untouched.

For the first time in years, nearly every building downtown is filled with businesses. Vacant storefronts are few, down to a 1 percent vacancy rate compared with 10 percent just 2½ years ago.

Aggressive real estate agents and landlords worked to lure one-of-a-kind businesses to the downtown, and it appears to have worked.

In 1994 alone, newcomers include a popular bread bakery, a sports card collection shop, restaurants, a coffee shop, a Southwestern shop, a quilt shop, a sporting goods store and an interior decorating shop.

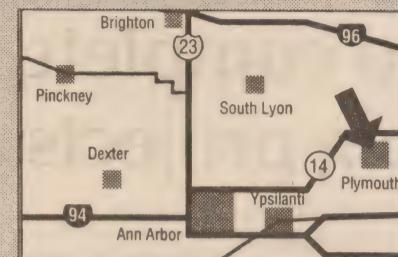
Businesses report a 10-percent to 12-percent increase in sales over the previous year, said Guile.

One home, kitchen and gift specialty store is expanding. The Sideways on Forest Street is building a second floor to accommodate extra merchandise. And the landmark Mayflower Hotel, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy two years ago, has new owners and is mounting a \$1.2 million renovation plan that would move the restaurant-bar to the front of the building, where it would overlook Kellogg Park.

And finally, after years of disappoint-

See PLYMOUTH, Page 12

PLYMOUTH



POPULATION: 9,560

RACE: White 99% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 29%; \$25-\$75K: 58%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 64%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead for Plymouth-Canton Schools): 34.13; 1993: 61.49

LARGEST EMPLOYER: Adistra Corp., a direct-mail firm on Union Street Road has 633, up from 385 employees the previous year.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: The now defunct Highland Superstores Inc. — once the city's largest employer — paid \$263,464 in taxes in 1994 on its former corporate headquarters on Sheldon Road. The Packaging Corp., also on Sheldon Road, is the city's second largest taxpayer and paid \$92,931 in 1994.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Low vacancy rate for city's commercial buildings with many new stores moving into downtown.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: \$1.2 million renovation of the landmark Mayflower Hotel.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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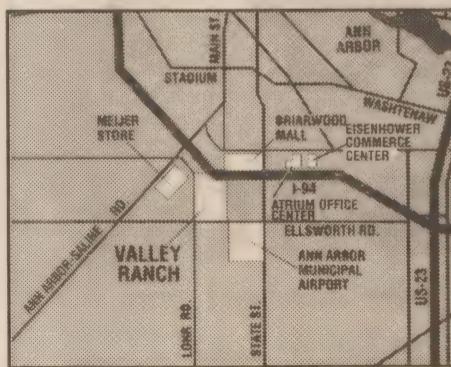
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COMMUNITIES

Continued from 11

PLYMOUTH: Big changes are also on the way for Plymouth Township

ment brought on by tax changes, the city got the approval to sell \$2.4 million in bonds to finance a downtown street-scape overhaul for landscaping, lights, signs, benches and walks. Construction will begin this spring.

"I'm very excited about this," Guile said. "It is going to be work, but when it's done, Plymouth's downtown will more than ever be a place to shop, bring the kids and spend time."

In surrounding Plymouth Township, change also is on the horizon.

Ending about a year of talks, the city and township forged an agreement to adopt common construction and landscaping standards along their shared Ann Arbor Road border.

From signs to sidewalks, it will soon be law that as existing businesses renovate and update they adopt the new standards and give the heavily trafficked corridor a more uniform look.

"We've passed the resolution of intent," said James D. Anulewicz, the township's director of public services, "and we came up with common standards for each. To me, that is a monumental step that two separate communities were able to sit down and address this and come to an agreement. I don't think it's ever been done before."

"It is still preliminary, but it is a plan of action, and as it's implemented over a period of time, I believe you are going to see substantial modification of the area's appearance."

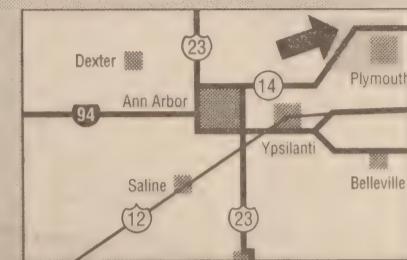
Where the city's Main Street intersects with Ann Arbor Road, officials want to make a statement that lets people know they have arrived.

Unusual for Plymouth Township, which years ago adopted a policy of no commercial growth so as to preserve the city's economic viability, has been the OK for a small strip mall on Beck Road, near Five Mile Road. It will be near the I-96 exit and be buffered by existing industrial parks.

Slated for development is the township's last existing parcel of real empty land, a 200-acre site at Ann Arbor Road and Napier Road, which is to be developed by Garden City developers Marcello and Silvio Scapaticci.

Country Acres will be constructed in six

PLYMOUTH TWP.



POPULATION: 23,648

RACE: White 97% Other 3%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 18% \$25-\$75K: 50%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 82%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead for Plymouth-Canton Schools): 24.82; 1993: 52.22

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Ford Motor Company climate-control plant on Sheldon Road employs 1,920 workers, up from last year's 1,600; paid \$471,020 in 1994 taxes, compared to \$590,935 in 1993 property taxes.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Large homes on large parcels continue to be developed in western township areas.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Possibly some life into Northville Road, between Hines Park and Five Mile roads, where two empty businesses now sit; some small strip mall commercial development on Beck Road, near Five Mile Road; preliminary work on upscale Country Acres, a 200-acre development proposed in phases on Ann Arbor Road, near Napier, the township's last real open space.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

phases, spanning perhaps as much as 10 years, depending on market demand, and will have a total of 443 new homes and condominiums. Anulewicz predicts it will have a great impact on the township because of its size and because it means the last of the township's large parcel of buildable land will be gone.

Homes will sell for about \$300,000, and construction could begin this spring. It includes five subdivisions and one cluster site.

Continued from 8

MANCHESTER: Tavern sold

doors.

"Anyone who wants a job around here can get one," Achtenberg said.

Once again this year, Achtenberg and Wallace are hoping that the Black Sheep Tavern will be restored and operational. The tavern was destroyed by fire in September of 1991, but firefighters were able to save the structure of the old building. According to Achtenberg, the tavern drew a large clientele and was "the place to go." Wallace said the building has been bought by a new owner, but no renovations have been started.

Several road construction and re-paving projects are in the works for 1995, Wallace said. The village recently passed a 1-mill tax levy to do larger street resurfacing programs, he said. Also, a new water filter sys-

tem is being implemented to withdraw iron from the water systems. That project should be completed this spring, Wallace said.

Also, a bond proposal will go before the community in March for the expansion of several schools, Achtenberg said.

Anyone planning an overnight trip to Manchester should know to make overnight accommodations somewhere else. According to Achtenberg, there are no hotels or motels in Manchester. However, some people have recently expressed interest in starting up a few bed-and-breakfasts in the historic old village.

"There's been some pretty serious talk about one or two bed-and-breakfasts opening up. Some kind of accommodations are needed," Achtenberg said.

COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • JOHN M. GALLOWAY

The Brighton Mall is undergoing radical change. The small enclosed mall is about to become a strip mall, but it will be larger and have more stores.

Brighton area boom expected to continue

Homes, retail to follow record '94 growth

By TOM TOLEN
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

They say they've got the best of both worlds. Many people have moved into the Brighton area in the last several years because it has the lakes, woods and hilly terrain of sparsely populated northern Michigan but is close to jobs and recreational activities in the urban hub around Detroit.

As a result, southeastern Livingston County has been experiencing a growth spurt that will continue well into the 21st century. That is the conclusion of city and township planners and economic development experts.

According to the Livingston County Planning Department, the population of the four townships surrounding the city of Brighton was expected to grow by 17 percent between 1992 and the year 2000.

The area has drawn people looking for a spot farther out from the urban hub partly because it is close to the US-23 and I-96 freeways, making for easy access by commuters. It's within a 45-minute drive from downtown Detroit, Flint and Lansing, and only 20 minutes from Ann Arbor.

Brighton Township is both the most populous and the most affluent in the area with 16,095 residents (SEMCOG, 1993 estimate) and an average household income of \$56,009 (1990 census). That compares to Livingston County's average household income of \$45,439, the state's highest. Oakland County is second.

While welcoming planned, quality growth, the township has been careful not to harm the laid-back lifestyle that attracted people to the area in the first place. In 1992, the township's board of trustees established a new zoning designation, "rural country estates," calling for a minimum lot size of five acres in about 20 percent of the township.



POPULATION: 27,999 (Brighton School District)

RACE: White 98% Asian 1% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 21% \$25-\$75K: 59%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 82%

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census

The restriction is being challenged by developers, who have filed a class action lawsuit, claiming the zoning ordinance is unconstitutional. The main plaintiff in the suit is Julie Fielek, a Brighton developer and trustee in nearby Green Oak Township.

There were 900 new housing units constructed in the Brighton area during 1994, an increase of nearly 40 percent over the previous year, when there were 660 homes built.

The great majority of the units built last year were single-family homes except in the city of Brighton, where 63 of the 88 units built were condominiums or apartments.

This year the building boom is expected to continue unabated. For instance, some nine developments of 40 or more homes each are slated for completion in Green Oak Township alone.

See BOOM, Page 14

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COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • JOHN M. GALLOWAY

The Target store is one of two big discount stores in Brighton that developers hope to build small shopping centers around this year.

Continued from 13

BOOM: Residents fight against higher-density development

The battle between developers and those who want to keep the area in its present, relatively rural state is exemplified in the tug-of-war between Beck Development Co., which wants to turn a gravel quarry into a plush residential development, and a citizens' group calling itself Land Action of Green Oak.

The residents who live near the proposed project say it's too dense (one-half acre per housing unit) and its impact on the township will erode the quality of life. LAGO volunteers were able to obtain nearly 1,000 signatures of township residents to force a coming referendum on the issue.

Neighboring Hamburg Township recorded the highest number of new homes constructed in the county during last year with 428, and zoning administrator Steve Pugsley expects another record-setting year in 1995.

Inside Brighton city limits, there are a limited number of undeveloped areas left because the city is hemmed in by the townships and I-96. The city is projected to grow at a modest rate of 3 percent over the next 15 years.

However, Brighton is the focal point of much of the commercial growth that is taking place in the area. The Brighton Towne Square office-retail development, the Brighton Mall expansion and renovation project,

the decision by ABC Warehouse to locate the first retail outlet of a major discount appliance and electronics chain in the county there, plans to construct two small shopping centers near the Meijer and Target stores and downtown improvements are major components of this activity.

Brighton and the surrounding townships are like the hub of a wheel and its spokes: One cannot function without the other. Brighton provides many of the amenities — theater, movies, live outdoor concerts, a performing arts center, restaurants, the Mill Pond Park and shopping — that residents of the outlying townships want and use.

That symbiotic relationship would seem to dictate cooperation rather than competition, and that is the position the city and townships recently have adopted after several years of annexation and other disputes.

Brighton City Manager Dana Foster says: "I think our intergovernmental relations with the four adjoining townships are more positive than a year or so ago.

"There is more constructive dialogue going on. . . . Passage of the (Brighton Area District) library millage in the spring also relieved tensions between the city and townships. The city was paying half the costs, and only 25 percent of the library users are city residents."

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COMMUNITIES

DDA boosts Milan downtown; industrial park awaits tenants

By DAN BEDORE
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

MILAN — There's good news from city businesses small and large.

The downtown business district is benefiting from the help of the Downtown Development Authority, and a new 24-acre industrial park awaits its first tenant.

On the residential drawing boards, two developments are set to begin construction: a 72-unit apartment complex off Redman Road and the first phase of a 30-lot subdivision of small, single-family homes near Platt and Redman roads.

The industrial park, started last year, is complete and has 15 lots ready for development, according to Building Official Craig Strong.

"We're talking with a couple of interested parties right now," he said, "but these things take time."

The park, at the corner of Platt and Redman roads, cost the city \$1.1 million and is designed to accommodate small businesses and light industry. The city hopes it will bring jobs and increased tax base.

Several new businesses have opened their doors in the past year.

Wolverine Truss opened its operation in April 1994 and has grown to 42 employees.

Wolverine builds roof trusses for residential and commercial construction. Greenfield said business is very dependent on the construction market as a whole, but he is not concerned with rising interest rates.

"We anticipate more than doubling the number of employees in 1995," said Eric Greenfield, plant general manager. "We hope to more than double our sales. My feeling is that '95 will be a very good year for us."

The Colonel's Inc., 620 Platt Road, builds replacement bumpers for cars and trucks. "We are the leading replacement parts manufacturer in North America," said Jeff Chimovitz, company general counsel.

The Colonel's began operation in the 350,000-square-foot former Freighauf plant with six employees in October 1993 and has grown to 140. "We are actively hiring now and expect a great 1995," Chimovitz said.

The firm ran into trouble last year when it was operating the paint line without a state air-quality license. But the company came to an agreement with the state Department of Natural Resources to switch from a solvent-based paint operation to water-based, which produces far fewer emissions.

The change in the paint systems was

Continued from 9

SALINE: Hospital being renovated

the downtown area and about 130 jobs.

■ Saline Community Hospital will complete its \$8 million expansion and renovation project. A dedication ceremony has been scheduled for April 23.

■ St. Andrew's Catholic Church expects to submit a plan for a new sanctuary and parsonage.

■ Evangelical Homes of Michigan is to construct a 64-unit housing development for senior citizens.

■ A proposed subdivision of 209 single-family homes on 82 acres along Austin Road.

In addition, Saline Area School officials are planning to hold a special election in September for another bond issue. Last

MILAN SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 10,478

RACE: White 79% Black 18% Other 3%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 25% \$25-\$75K: 60%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 82%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in Milan Village in Washtenaw County): 39.5; 1993: 68.6

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Ford Motor Company plastics plant employs 1,200, a gain of some 200 workers from the previous year. Company provides about 40 percent of Milan's tax base in 1994, about the same as in 1993.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Opening of 24-acre industrial park. Wolverine Truss began manufacturing in April 1994.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: A 72-unit apartment complex off Redman Road. Phase one of a 30-lot subdivision of single-family homes.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

made last November, said Chimovitz. The firm agreed it would pay a \$200,000 fine, he said, but is awaiting final word from the DNR on the pact.

Small businesses are finding Milan attractive as well, said Lisa Lussier, DDA consultant. Three companies, Jones Insurance, NBD and Wolverine Realty, have completed facade renovations. The DDA offers a \$1,000 architectural grant for businesses to promote improvement.

There's a new Arby's Restaurant at Carpenter Road near US-23, a new Mobil gas station and a Pro-Hardware franchise in the Foodtown Plaza. Keepsake's Stained Glass opened in 1994 and, in January 1995, Jerri Johnson opened Weddings With Care, a full-service wedding-planning business.

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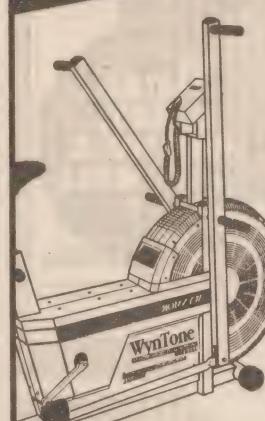
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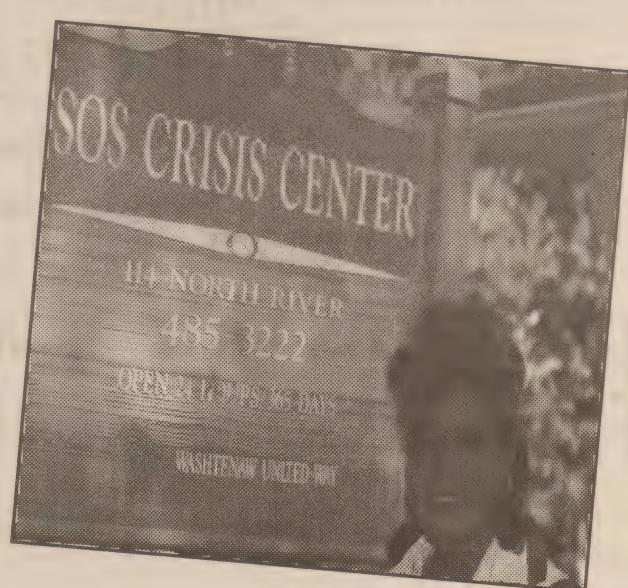
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Roger and Lois Katen



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Ossie Chambliss

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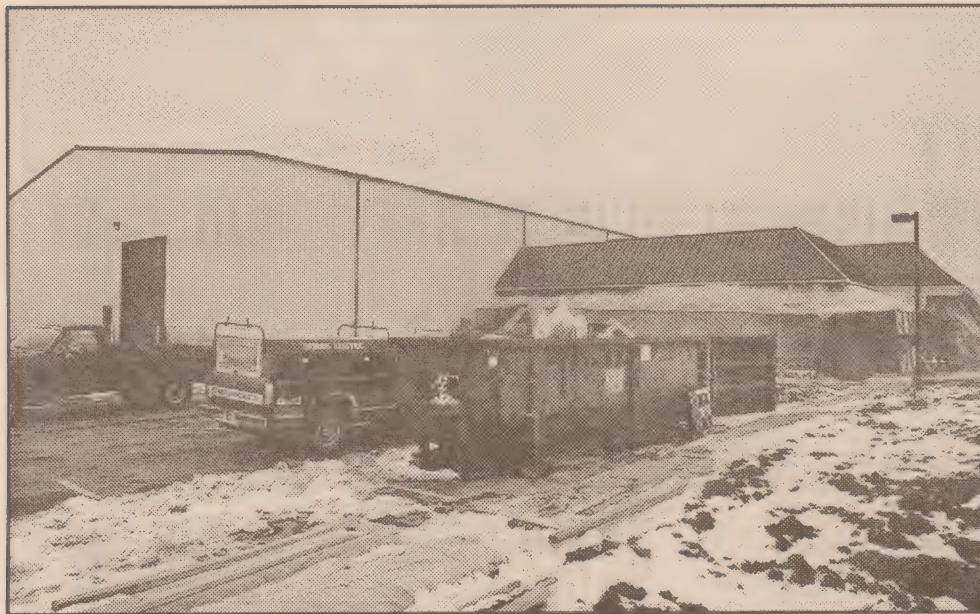
You can get all of that and much more in our Community Life page. It's packed with community-oriented news. You'll find it in the local section of the Ypsilanti Press edition every weekday.

When you subscribe to the Ypsilanti Press edition, you get more than that. Because we're a daily newspaper, you get accurate, timely reporting of important events as they occur.

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Ypsilanti Press
AN EDITION OF ANN ARBOR **NEWS**

COMMUNITIES



NEWS PHOTO • LARRY E. WRIGHT

Ypsilanti's West Commerce Park received a boost this past year with the addition of Bennett Installation Corp.

Ypsilanti's riding wave of renewal, revitalization

■ Surrounding townships optimistic as industry, services, housing stock grow.

By PAULA DOHRING GARDNER
NEWS ASSISTANT METRO EDITOR

The eastern edge of Washtenaw County is facing an optimistic 1995, following a year of rebound and renewal.

Ypsilanti, for starters, is taking a cue from the \$1.4 million Harriet Commerce Center. Initiated a few years ago — in the midst of economic slump and near the announced shutdown of General Motors' Willow Run Assembly plant — the center stands as a symbol of revitalization, both for the city and its long-neglected south side.

A variety of proposed projects and successes have the potential to further resurrect Ypsilanti's economic climate.

"We are coming out of the economic doldrums in the city," says City Manager Herb Gilsdorf. "And when the downtown work is completed we are going to see renewed activity in downtown because it will be that much more attractive and functional."

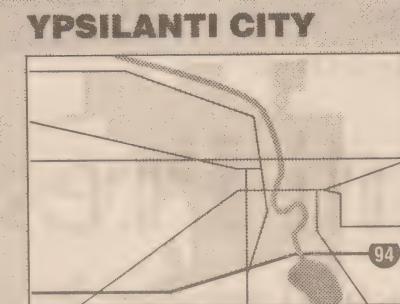
Long-range planning by the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority, augmented with a \$350,000 Michigan Department of Transportation grant and a \$825,000 bond issue, has resulted in a downtown renovation project, replete with a new streetscape plan and a redesign of Michigan Avenue. The proposal also includes a face-lift of the Ypsilanti City Hall.

"I think that it's been proven in other communities, that when we start spending some public dollars, we will attract some private investors and private property owners," says DDA Executive Director Lori Ward.

Other economic highlights include:

■ A proposed \$5 million commercial development on Harriet Street, across from the Commerce Center.

■ Plans to upgrade the city's West Commerce Park, which is off Michigan Avenue on the city's west side. The park saw little activity in recent years, but that looks to change with this year's addition of Bennett



POPULATION: 24,846

RACE: White 69% Black 25% Asian 4%
Other 2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 56% \$25-\$75K: 40%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 34%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead):
47.70; 1993: 84.81

LARGEST EMPLOYER: Eastern Michigan University with 1,800 faculty and staff, the same as in 1993.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Ford Motor Co., \$2.7 million in 1994, compared to \$2.8 million in 1993.

1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Completion of the \$1.4 million Harriet Commerce Center.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS:

Proposed \$5 million Harriet street commercial development; \$1.2 downtown streetscape improvement project.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

Installation Corp. joining long-term tenants such as United Parcel Service.

■ State grant award for public housing rehabilitation.



Ypsilanti Township

Ypsilanti Township, which surrounds the city, is growing steadily in all areas. Yet, the

See YPSILANTI, Page 20

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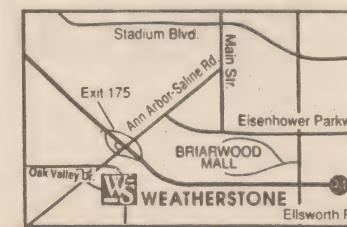
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COMMUNITIES

Visitors bureau gets word out about Ypsilanti's surprises

BY PAMELA GOSSIAUX

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Over 1.4 million people a year attend events in Ypsilanti, and Mary Kerr and the staff at the Ypsilanti Area Visitors and Convention Bureau are a large part of making that happen.

"We try to give people a reason to come to Ypsilanti," says Kerr. "They see that it's a nice place to visit, that the people are friendly, and they will come back."

Kerr, in her role for the past five years as the executive director of the VCB, has worked hard at building Ypsilanti's image as a place to visit and a place to bring the family on vacation. The VCB uses the logo "Ypsilanti - Let Us Surprise You," and those who have lived in the city for years might even be surprised at all the area has to offer.

Because Kerr lives in Ypsilanti herself, wanting to see the city successful fits into her life personally as well as professionally. "I would like to see Ypsilanti grow and prosper and strengthen," Kerr says, "and it's important that everyone in the community understands the value of tourism in the Ypsilanti area."

Kerr's job is essentially four-fold. First, she works on convention sales and marketing. The VCB has created a "Convention Planner" that it sends to any potential customer interested in bringing in groups of

people to a central meeting place. She sells Ypsilanti to them as "one-stop shopping" by pulling together a number of meeting and conference sites, hotels and "after-hours" entertainment such as the shops and restaurants within walking distance.

Last year she brought in the state Kiwanis convention during the Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

"We want to use the festival as an attraction for groups and conventions," says Kerr. "Also, we hope the people staying here will see what we have to offer and come back with their families."

Kerr says the number of people that conventions bring into Ypsilanti can have a tremendous effect on the city's economy.

"In August we brought in the Plumbers and Pipefitters convention, which was held for one week at Washtenaw Community College," says Kerr. "There were 2,000 people, and they took up 8,000 hotel nights. Plus, they shopped and ate at our restaurants."

Some merchants, who recognize the importance of Kerr's role and that of the VCB, are working toward bringing in people on their own. "They have formed the Depot Town Merchants' Association," says Kerr. "They're working to promote tourism here in our area. Together they will develop their product and then find a way to promote it."

A second aspect of Kerr's role as executive director involves communication, both



Mary Kerr directs the Ypsilanti Area Visitors and Convention Bureau.

NEWS PHOTO
LARRY E. WRIGHT

within the community and outside of it. "That includes our sales brochures and advertising in trade publications," says Kerr.

Kerr makes sure the appropriate brochures go out to the Michigan Department of Transportation and get put in roadside rest areas, hotels and restaurants. She also mails out several thousand a year in response to inquiries.

Working with the I-94 Shore to Shore organization, Kerr meets monthly to promote the freeway. "We want to give the travelers a reason to stop," says Kerr. So the group publishes a quarterly brochure announcing all the area events and dates that are happening along the way. That way, potential visitors know what is here — or what they are missing if they choose to drive on by.

"We get noticed, and it gets us free publicity," says Kerr. "Because of this I-94 Shore to Shore organization we put together, there is an article that will soon appear

in the Midwest Living magazine with a photo of Depot Town in it."

Kerr also does a lot of networking with other communities. "We share ideas, and try to heighten our awareness of what is available," says Kerr. "We maintain contact with the travel bureau to let them know of our events."

Thirdly, Kerr works on community relations. She has found that Ypsilanti is full of caring people who eagerly offer their assistance to help make their city a better place.

"I am invited to give presentations in other areas," says Kerr, "and people always ask how I get so many volunteers. I think there is a positive awareness in our community. For the Festival of Lights alone there were 1,000 volunteers. And thousands more are active throughout the year on other VCB events. I think one of Ypsilanti's greatest strengths is its volunteers — the giving brings the people closer together."

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COMMUNITIES

Festivals of music, lights, heritage, more

Finding entertainment in Ypsilanti should be no problem. This year's highlights include:

The Gus Macker Tournament on May 20-21. This is the world's largest street basketball tournament in which numerous teams compete 3-on-3 and anyone can play.

The Macker features a slam-dunk contest, 3-point shoot-out contest, kids' court and much more. Thirty to 40 percent of the people who come for this event are from outside of Ypsilanti.

The Frog Island Music Festival, planned for June 23-25. This will be the 15th year for the event, which brings top-notch jazz, blues and gospel musicians to Frog Island Park and is a regional draw for music fans.

Frog Island is a collaborative effort of the Ark, WEMU, dozens of volunteers and co-founders Jim Dulzo and Carolyn McKeever — all of whom hope for a sunny weekend this year.

The Preview Of Champions Summer Music Games, to take place July 28-29, is estimated to bring almost 90 percent of its audience and participants from outside of the area. This event showcases some of the country's top drum corps musicians at Eastern Michigan University's Rynearson Stadium, one of the best viewing



NEWS FILE PHOTO

Two women basketball players compete in the Gus Macker tournament.

arenas in the country. This is the largest event of its kind except for the world championship.

The Ypsilanti Heritage Festival is Aug. 18-20. More than 200 exhibitors will display their arts and crafts. You can enjoy historic tours, Michigan's top jazz artists, parade, Rubber Ducky race and days of non-stop entertainment for the whole family. This event won the Governor's Embassy

of Tourism award and attracts more than 300,000 people annually.

At the end of the year is the Festival of Lights. From Nov. 19 to Dec. 31, Riverside Park will glitter with more than 70,000 lights as the Ypsilanti area celebrates the winter season. Viewers — about 40 percent from outside of Ypsilanti — will stroll through the lit park on foot, drive through or enjoy free horse-drawn wagon rides.

The events mentioned above average nearly a half-million spectators annually. However, many other smaller activities add to the overall community offerings.

Among them are activities that highlight Ypsilanti's historical image.

"Ypsilanti is the second-largest historic city in Michigan, next to Grand Rapids," says Mary Kerr, executive director of the Visitors and Convention Bureau.

"The Antique Fire Hall draws a lot of visitors," says Kerr, "especially for its large collection of 'petroleum memorabilia.'" There is Miller Motors with its collection of Hudsons and what Kerr calls Washtenaw County's best-kept secret: the Yankee Air Museum, actually in Van Buren Township.

And of course there's the Ypsilanti Historical Museum, housing years of Ypsilanti history in an elegant brick mansion.

Enjoy art, theater, comedy or whatever is your fancy at any number of places in Ypsilanti. EMU's Ford Gallery features professional exhibitions as well as juried student art in all types of media. There is the Intermedia Gallery, also on campus, or River Art Works, featuring original art by Michigan artists and housed on East Cross Street.

Both EMU and the Ypsilanti Players provide stage drama, and there is the Riverside Arts Center on Huron.

Kerr also mentions her excitement about the third annual New Year Jubilee, a huge party that brought in the year 1995 in an alcohol-free environment.

For more information on Ypsilanti area events, call the VCB at 483-4444 or pick up some free brochures from its office. It is on the main floor of the Society Bank building, 301 W. Michigan Avenue, Suite 101.

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Top left to right: Michael Patterson, Eleanor Melville, Lorrie Douglas, Mike Kaplan. Seated-Bart Tittler, Connie Emry, Patrick Chase, Betsy Beckerman, Jackie Doneghy-Allen, Joyce Glisson, Jeannine Hayden. Not pictured-Richard Dutton, Susan Davenport-Geer, Maria Lamers, Eva Olson, Kirk Brower, Lew Okua, Tom Skiver.



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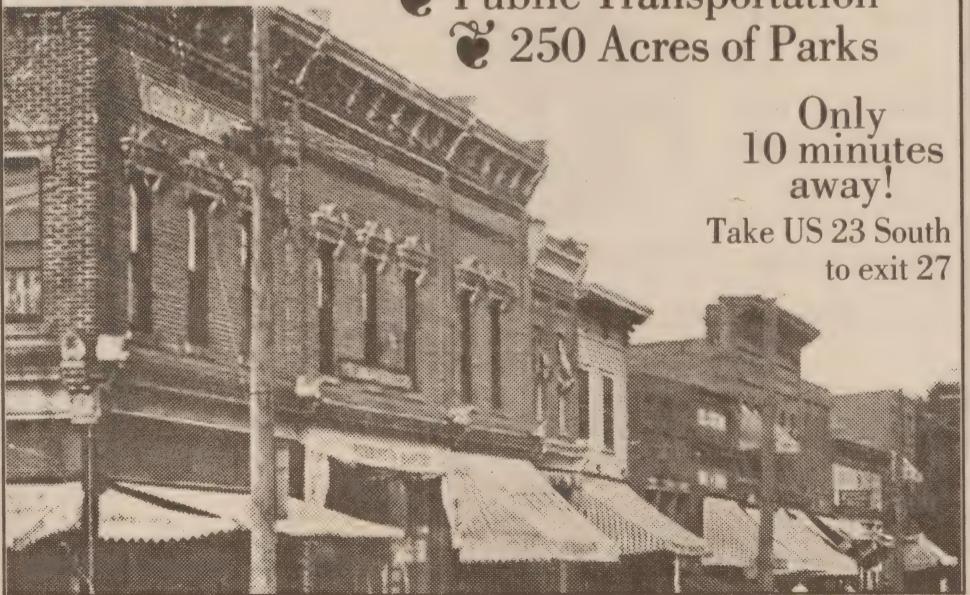
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COMMUNITIES

Continued from 17

YPSILANTI: Most of area enjoys growth, new job opportunities

development has not been so fast as to cause growing pains in Washtenaw County's second-largest community.

"We experienced growth in all areas of zoning," said Harry Hutchison, the township's development director. "Last year was the best I can remember."

In 1994, several housing developments were started, a \$1 million laboratory was built onto the Ford Motor Co. Rawsonville plant and there was a 17,000-square-foot expansion to Blackmore Industries off of Rawsonville Road.

But perhaps the most important piece of the development puzzle was the addition of Engineered Plastic Products Inc. to the Washtenaw Business Park. The company built an 85,000-square-foot plant in the industrial park and plans to move its current operation in Roseville to the new facility in March.

The new plant will employ about 100 people initially, but could quickly grow to 120.

Formerly known as the Huron Center, the industrial park on Huron Street just south of I-94 has been frustrated in attempts to attract business to it for nearly a decade.

"It took a while, that's true," Hutchison said of the western section of the 393-acre park, which for years housed only a McDonald's restaurant. The Radisson Resort and Conference Center and the Huron Golf Club occupy the eastern section of the park.

Such space is hard to come by, Hutchison said.

"It's rapidly being used up," he said. "We used to have a lot of space along Washtenaw (Avenue), but now both that and Michigan Avenue are booked up pretty good."



Superior Township

In contrast, Superior Township likes to bill itself as the last bit of green space between Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Squeezed by burgeoning development in Ann Arbor and Canton townships, Superior includes such diverse communities as the hamlet of Dixboro, the Sycamore Meadow subsidized housing complex, century-old family farms, woodlands and wetlands.

"Bigger is not always better," Supervisor William McFarlane is fond of saying.

Yet, developers continue to knock at the door of Superior, which already includes one huge development — the Catherine McAuley Health System. The township, just north of Ypsilanti, issued 48 new single-family home building permits last year. Projects under way or scheduled to begin by mid-year could eventually add 1,125 new dwelling units to the township. New home categories range from six-figure houses to 644 new lots in two mobile home parks.

The developments could raise the township's population from 9,100 now to about 12,000 in the next few years.

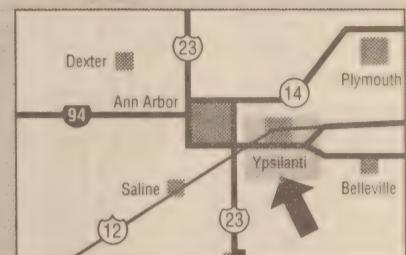


Augusta Township

Augusta Township, to the south of Ypsilanti, has virtually no commercial industrial tax base. Augusta officials were busy improving services to residents in 1994 and look for more of the same in 1995.

Among last year's improvements, MichCon installed 22 miles of natural gas mains

YPSILANTI TWP.



POPULATION: 45,307

RACE: White 79% Black 18% Asian 1% Other 2%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 35% \$25-\$75K: 57%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 56%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead): Lincoln schools, 35.14 mills, Van Buren schools, 31.79, Willow Run schools, 36.89, Ypsilanti schools, 33.52. For 1993: Lincoln, 64.39; Van Buren, 64.82; Willow Run, 68.65, Ypsilanti, 68.03

LARGEST EMPLOYER AND TAXPAYER:

General Motors Corp. Powertrain Division transmission plant paid \$5.8 million in 1994 taxes. Plant had 7,118 employees in 1994, down slightly from 7,179 employees in 1993.

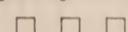
KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Engineered Plastics Technologies, which built a new plant in the Washtenaw Business Park at I-94 and Huron. The new plant will employ as many as 100 when it opens in March.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS:

Wisconsin-based wilderness outfitter Gander Mountain Inc.'s plans to build a 33,000-square-foot retail store on 3.93 acres in the Washtenaw Business Park.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

in the township. This year, the township expects to seek bids for a \$6.8 million, 29-mile water main project by the end of March.



Western Wayne County

Nearby western Wayne County communities also are experiencing optimism and growth.

One of the chief developments of 1994 was the beginning of a mammoth construction project that will widen Belleville Road from I-94 south to the Belleville Road bridge.

The project began last summer and is expected to be completed in the fall. The township also is working on expanding Belleville Road from I-94 north to Tyler Road.

As one of the few remaining rural areas between Ann Arbor and Detroit, Sumpter Township is ripe for development. New houses, both stick built and modular, are being built in the area. But along with the increase in residents comes a need for improving services while protecting the environment.

The township built the first phase of a sewer project in 1994, installing sewers on Willis Road between Rawsonville and Sumpter roads. The sewer project is funded by revenue from the new Carleton Farms landfill.

The township hopes to continue the sewer project along Sumpter Road south to Oakville-Waltz. That project might have to be done in several phases, because of financing concerns arising from Wayne County's legal battle over capacity of the landfill.

COMMUNITIES

Principal Kary Herrala and some of Whitmore Lake Elementary School's 718 students. The school is getting close to overcrowded.

NEWS PHOTO
LARRY E. WRIGHT



Northfield's growth depends on taps

■ Township presses ahead with another sewer plant expansion.

By MARILYN TRUMPER-SAMRA
NEWS SPECIAL WRITER

WHITMORE LAKE — It's just a little more than 2 years old, and already Northfield Township might have used up all the new capacity in the \$3 million expansion of its sewer plant.

Newly constructed single-site homes combined with proposed subdivisions and condominium projects will take almost all of the newly created 600 sewer taps, which finds township officials hustling to get started on a Phase III expansion of the Lemen Road plant.

Once done, it will create another 700 to 900 taps, Supervisor William Eskridge said, and allow greater growth. Expected to cost about \$1.3 million, existing funds combined with tap-in fees will pay for the project. Green Oak Township, which wants capacity in the project, has been negotiating what costs it will share, Eskridge said, and how much capacity it can buy.

"We do have a lot of development currently in the works," Eskridge said. "We actually got more development than we thought in a short time. We knew it was coming, but not this quickly. That's the reason the Planning Commission is so careful in its reviews."

On the board are three housing projects: ■ Eagle Gardens, formerly known as Eagle Shores, 206 homes on 123 acres off East Shore Drive, a plan that has been repeatedly modified, received preliminary plat approval last month from the Northfield Township Planning Commission. The next step will be final plat approval, which is expected to be considered later this spring.

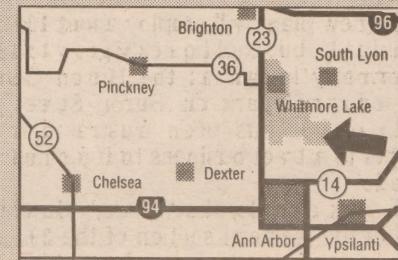
■ Wildwood Lake Subdivision, 78 homes on 40 acres on the south side of Barker Road, west of US-23. Construction could begin in the fall.

■ Bear Creek Development, 47 homes on 25 acres in the heart of the Links at Whitmore Lake on Six Mile Road, near Nollar Road. It still faces a rezoning review.

Very preliminary talks are under way for apartments and condominiums on Main Street and Hillcrest, in the hamlet area.

Southfield developer Sheldon Applefield has agreed to dedicate land at US-23 and North Territorial Road for the township's second sewer plant. While talks are in the very preliminary stages, such a plant would allow sewer capacity in an area now serviced solely by septic systems and give a high-voltage jump start to development of a

WHITMORE LK. SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 6,054

RACE: White 95% Black 4% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 24% \$25-\$75K: 67%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 79%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in Northfield Township): 32.11; 1993: 56.75

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Woodbridge Corp plant (formerly Johnson Controls), \$94,592 in 1994 taxes, compared to about \$127,000 in 1993. Hourly workforce in 1994 of 145 people about same in 1993. Drop in salaried force from 34 to 28.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Wildwood Lake Subdivision heads to final plat approval for 40-acre parcel on the south side of Barker Road, west of US-23. Two others, Bear Creek, a 47-home golf course community, and controversial Eagle Gardens on East Shore Drive comprised of 206 homes. Eagle Gardens and Bear Creek have received preliminary approval. Final approval is to be considered this spring.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: \$13 million bond sale to build new elementary school and to renovate/expand the middle school/high school campus.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

planned research-technology park there.

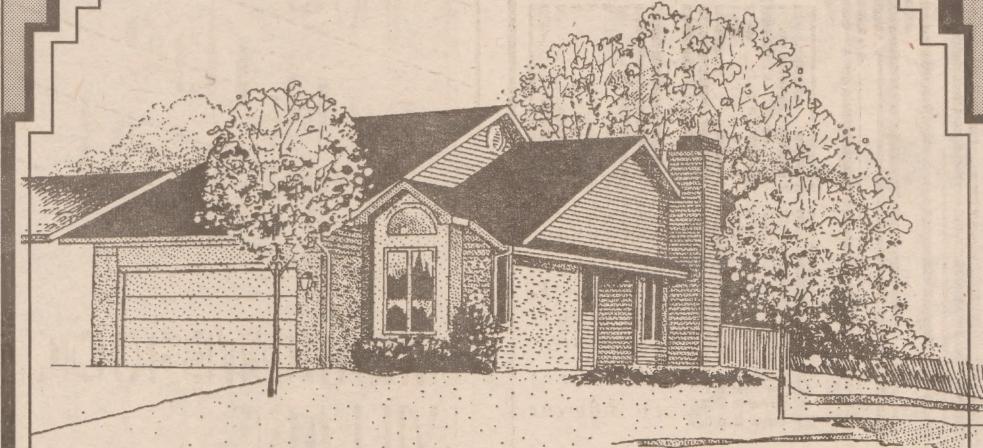
All of this development has not gone unnoticed by the community's school district, Whitmore Lake.

Its new elementary school, home to 718 students including preschool through fourth grade, opened in 1991 and is quickly filling up.

A 34-member committee of parents, educators and local officials has recommended the district consider a \$13 million bond proposal to build a new elementary school and for a renovation-expansion of the high school-middle school campus. The district's 1,200 students are expected to grow by about 750 in the next 10 years, and space is at a premium.

Superintendent Glenn Bachman expects the board to move quickly on portions of the plan and said the bond issue probably would be at the top of the board's list.

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COMMUNITIES

Chelsea confronts growth issues

City status weighed; mobile homes fought

By PETER EPHROSS
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

As it has for the last few years, balancing growth and a revitalized downtown with its residents' desire for a high quality of life continues to be the major theme in Chelsea.

Residents spoke out loud and clear on this issue when they showed up in large numbers several times in the last year to protest a proposed mobile home park on land that is currently in Lima Township adjacent to the village's east side.

The village planning commission recently recommended to the council that the village annex the land but allow zoning for low-density houses, thereby eliminating the possibility of a mobile home park.

While acknowledging that Chelsea's growth and downtown renaissance has helped his business, Jack Merkel, owner of Merkel Furniture and Floor Store at 209 South Main, says he speaks for many by saying: "Growth for growth's sake is not a good idea in my mind."

Housing prices have increased over the past several years as well, says local real estate agent Paul Frisinger. The price of a small three-bedroom house has risen from approximately \$90,000 in 1990 to about \$115,000 today, while the price of a standard house — 1,800 to 2,200 square feet — has risen from about \$135,000 to \$155,000 over the same time. Prices of brand new homes being built in Chelsea have risen to about \$180,000, Frisinger says.

Even at these prices, demand has been great. A subdivision under construction, Belser Estates, has sold almost all of its 70 lots.

A citizens' group, the city committee, has even formed to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Chelsea changing its status from village to city. The committee recently recommended that Chelsea become a city, but that likely would take several years, if it were to occur at all.

Despite all of the growing pains, business owners and residents alike are generally proud that Chelsea is recognized as a desirable place to live. Chelsea '95, a group that began strategic planning for the downtown area six years ago, recently completed its work.

"When we started, there were seven empty businesses. Now there aren't any," Merkel said.

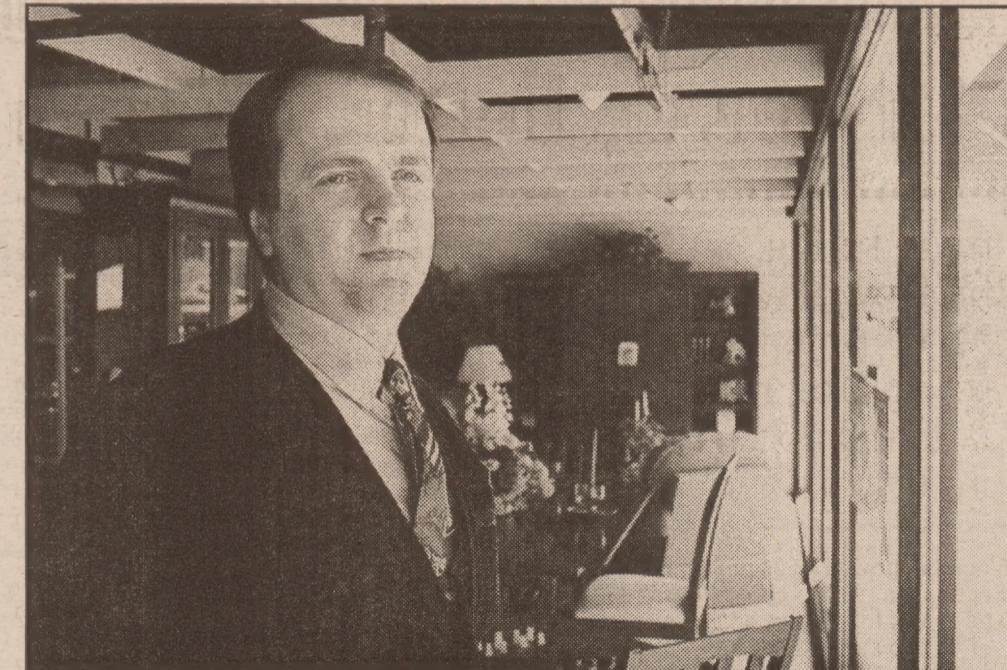
"There's no retail space available. If someone moves out, someone else asks to move in," agreed Pat Cleary, owner of Cleary's Pub and president of the Chelsea Chamber of Commerce.

One such example occurred last September when the Common Market opened in the space that had been Schneider's Grocery for 80 years.



NEWS PHOTOS • ROBERT CHASE

Larry Fogarty manages the Common Market, which opened in the former Schneider's Grocery back in September.



Tim Merkel surveys the downtown scene from Merkel Furniture and Floor Store on South Main Street. Vacant retail space in downtown Chelsea is scarce or nonexistent these days.

That situation replicated itself in the non-retail sector as well when the Dana Corp. closed this past January, only to be replaced by Ann Arbor Machine. BookCrafters also added 30,000 square feet to its Chelsea Industrial Park plant in 1994.

The Chelsea Community Hospital, in conjunction with the University of Michigan Hospitals, began adding a new family practice center on land it had purchased in 1993.

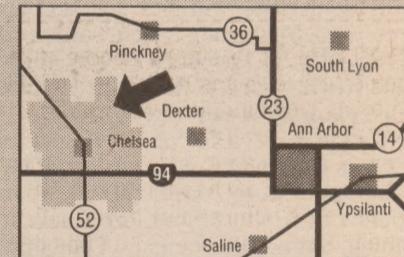
Some of the same institutions might build again this year. BookCrafters is considering another expansion — this time adding 60,000 square feet — while Chelsea Community Hospital and the U-M Hospital are con-

sidering building a senior citizens' center on the hospital grounds.

Several infrastructure projects are planned, as well. According to village manager Jack Myers, construction on the new water tower will start soon, while the new solid waste treatment plan is scheduled to be operating by April.

In the housing sector, construction of Belser Estates will continue. Other new projects include the opening of a nine-hole golf course, probably in July, near a new subdivision not far from Old US-12. Rene Papo plans to develop both the golf course and the subdivision on 340 acres recently annexed into the village.

CHELSEA SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 11,200 *

RACE: White 96% Black 3% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 24% \$25-\$75K: 62%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 83%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in village of Chelsea): 34; 1993: 55.72

LARGEST EMPLOYER: Chelsea Community Hospital, approximately 850 in 1994, compared to about 750 the year before.

LARGEST TAXPAYER: Chelsea Milling Co., approximately \$360,000 in 1994.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Home building and prices continued to rise; Common Market opens in former Schneider's Grocery downtown; Dana Corp. closes but is replaced by Ann Arbor Machine; BookCrafters publishers expands; Chelsea hospital begins adding family practice center.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS:

BookCrafters publishers may expand again; Chelsea Community Hospital and University of Michigan considering a Chelsea senior citizens' center; Nine-hole golf course may open on village's south side.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

* Does not include portion of district in Jackson County.

COMMUNITIES



Village Manager Gary Kuckel plans to have sewer lines extended east of Dexter this year to serve two new schools and other development.

NEWS PHOTO
MICHAEL A. CURLETT

Dexter strives for newer, better, more in coming year

By LIZ COBBS
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

DEXTER — There are a couple of reconstructed places, plans for a new look in the downtown area, and a new village manager to see all of it through.

Gary Kuckel came on board as the new village manager in October 1994. With more than 20 years behind him in the city management profession, Kuckel said he decided to take the job because he liked the area.

"I lived up the road (near Zukey Lake), and being in the city management profession, I wanted to land a job where I didn't have to keep moving," Kuckel said.

Kuckel replaces interim village manager Tom Daily, who took over after Dennis White resigned in April 1994. White, who had been village manager since June 1993, left to take a private management position in Arkansas.

Since 1992, Kuckel worked as a private consultant and filled in as interim management positions in various places. Prior to 1992, Kuckel served as city manager of Coldwater for 10 years.

One of several area projects planned this year, Kuckel said, is the extension of water and sewer lines east of town on Dexter-Ann Arbor Road that will serve two new schools and any new commercial or residential development along the way.

Construction continues on Dexter Community Schools' two new additional buildings on a 50-acre site along Dan Hoey and Dexter-Ann Arbor roads.

A \$13.1 million middle school and an \$8 million elementary school are the first major building construction projects the school district has undertaken in nearly 30 years.

In the spring, the Downtown Development Authority expects to undertake a parking improvement project.

Voters approved a \$26 million bond issue in September 1993 to construct the buildings and renovate existing school buildings.

The two-story Mill Creek Middle School will house 500 seventh- and eighth-graders. The single-story Cornerstone Elementary School will house 500 kindergartners and first-and second-graders in two wings.

"We're highly optimistic that the schools will be completed and ready to open in the fall," said Dexter Schools Superintendent John Hansen.

In June 1994, Dexter area voters passed a one-half mill (50 cents per \$1,000 assessed value) property tax levy for operating funds. The millage is expected to bring in \$176,796 for the library at 3173 Baker Road. The extra funds will allow library officials to update and purchase more reference and non-fiction materials, extend hours of operations and provide other services for the library's 4,500 patrons.

In August 1994, the Dexter Diner reopened after it was gutted in a fire that destroyed several downtown buildings in August 1993. Some work has been done on the facade of the Sportsman's Bar building,

where the fire originated, but work has not yet been completed. A Great Lakes Bancorp branch office also was destroyed in the blaze. A reconstructed branch office was scheduled to open in late February.

In the spring, the Downtown Development Authority expects to undertake a parking improvement project. The \$200,000 project to construct a parking lot behind the buildings in the central business district should add 30 more spaces, said DDA President Fred Schmid. The new spaces also will improve the traffic flow behind the Main Street buildings, Schmid said.

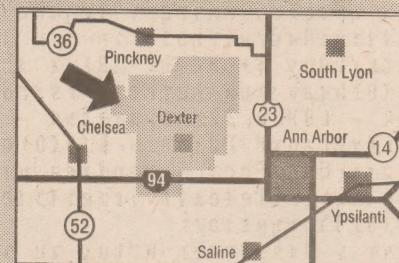
An estimated \$2 million streetscape project, still in the planning stages, could begin in the fall, Schmid said, once financing is acquired. The DDA is still looking for funding to finance the project that would provide improved lighting, new sidewalks and a more pedestrian-friendly intersection.

Also in the preliminary stages are Chelsea Community Hospital's plan to build a new medical facility in the area sometime this year, said Ruth Shantz, assistant administrator at the hospital. A site should be identified by late spring with construction getting under way after that, Shantz said.

Plans call for the new facility to house family physicians currently practicing in the village of Dexter, Shantz said. These physicians are on staff at Chelsea Community Hospital and at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Space also would be built for internal medicine physicians and for other services, which haven't been defined yet, Shantz said.

"The overall intent (of building a new facility) is to increase the amount and type of medical services in that area," Shantz said.

DEXTER SCHOOLS



POPULATION: 12,602

RACE: White 98% Asian 1% Other 1%

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: \$0-\$25K: 19% \$25-\$75K: 57%

PERCENTAGE OWNING A HOME: 86%

1994 MILLAGE RATE: 1994 (Homestead in Dexter village): 39.92; 1993: 68.1

LARGEST EMPLOYER and TAXPAYER: Pilot Industries, 331 employees in 1994, same as previous year. Company paid \$30,741 in property taxes in 1994.

KEY 1994 DEVELOPMENTS: Re-opening of several downtown buildings that were destroyed by fire in August 1993; Dexter Community Schools began construction on a middle school and elementary school.

EXPECTED 1995 DEVELOPMENTS: Work on \$2 million in downtown improvements; Chelsea Community Hospital plans to build physician's office in Dexter.

SOURCE: 1994 local government records; 1990 U.S. Census

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